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THE HISTORY AND DOCTRINES OF THE KARRĀMIYYA SECT
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO AR-RĀZĪ'S CRITICISM

by

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

The objective of this thesis is the study of the history and doctrines of one of the Muslim sects namely the Karrāmiyya sect, with special attention made to Fakhr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī's criticism of the sect's doctrines and views. Therefore the first chapter of this study is dedicated to the study of ar-Rāzī's life in particular that part connected with his involvement with the Karrāmites. In the second chapter I have treated the history of the sect starting from its founder Muḥammad Ibn-Karrām including various aspects of his life as well as his achievement and significance. It is also dealt here with the history of the sect after Ibn-Karrām and the role which his ad^h^hents had played in the life of Khurāsān and the Ghūr region.

The following chapters have been devoted to the explanation of the theological doctrines of the sect. In the third chapter it is dealt with the Karrāmite views regarding the nature of God and the problems related to their views in this respect. Therefore a section of this chapter is concerned with the sect's views of the Essence of God, another with their **VIEWS** of God's attributes and the third with their theory of the origination and annihilation of the world. The sect's views regarding the problem of Free will and predestination have been considered in the fourth chapter, and in the fifth their Doctrine of faith and its further implications have been treated. And in the last chapter the Karrāmite concept

of the Prophecy have been considered. All this has been dealt with in comparison between the Karrāmites views and the views of other sects, particularly the Ash'arites whose views were presented mainly by Fakhr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<u>Arba 'īn</u>	Ar-Rāzī, <u>Al-Arba 'īn fī Uṣūl ad-Dīn</u>
<u>Asās</u>	Ar-Rāzī, <u>Asās at-Taqdīs fi 'Ilm al-Kalām</u>
<u>C.A.J.</u>	<u>Central Asiatic Journal</u>
<u>E.I.</u>	<u>Encyclopaedia of Islam</u>
<u>Farq</u>	al-Baghdādī, <u>al-Farq bayn al-Firaq</u>
<u>Fisal</u>	Ibn-Ḥazm, <u>al-Fiṣal fi-l-Milal wa-l-Ahwā' wa-n-Nihāl</u>
<u>Hukamā'</u>	al-Qiftī, <u>Tārīkh al-Hukamā'</u>
<u>I.A.</u>	Ibn-al-Athīr, <u>al-Kāmil fi-t-Tārīkh</u>
<u>Ḥyā'</u>	al-Ghazālī, <u>Ḥyā' 'ulūm ad-Dīn</u>
<u>Īmān</u>	Ibn-Taymīyya, <u>Kitāb al-Īmān</u>
<u>Iqdām</u>	ash-Shahrastānī, <u>Nihāyāt al-Iqdām fi 'Ilm al-Kalām</u>
<u>Iqtisād</u>	al-Ghazālī, <u>al-Iqtisād fi-l-I'tiqād</u>
<u>Irshād</u>	al-Juwayni, <u>al-Irshād ila Qawāti' al-Adilla fi-Uṣūl al-I'tiqād</u>
<u>Lisān</u>	Ibn-Ḥajar, <u>Lisān al-Mīzān</u>
<u>Ma 'ālim</u>	ar-Rāzī, <u>Ma 'ālim Uṣūl ad-Dīn</u>
<u>Milal</u>	ash-Shahrastānī, <u>Kitāb al-Milal wa-n-Nihāl</u>
<u>Mir'āt</u>	Yāfi 'ī, <u>Mir'āt az-Zamān</u>
<u>Mizān</u>	Adh-Dhahabī, <u>Mīzān al-I'tidāl fi-Naqd ar-Rijāl</u>
<u>Muḥaṣṣal</u>	Ar-Rāzī, <u>Muḥaṣṣal afkār al-Mutaqaddimīn wa-l-Muta'khkhirīn</u>
<u>Munāzarāt</u>	Ar-Rāzī, <u>Munāzarāt Fakhr ad-Dīn al-Rāzī fi māwarā' an-Nahr</u>

<u>M.W.</u>	<u>The Muslim World</u>
<u>Q</u>	The <u>Qur'an</u> . for translation I have used <u>The Holy Qur'an</u> , Arabic text, Translation and commentary by Maulānā Muḥammad 'Alī, Fourth edition. Lahore: 1951.
<u>Sam 'anī</u>	<u>Kitāb al-Ansāb</u>
<u>Shadharāt</u>	Ibn-al-'Imād <u>Shadharāt adh-Dhahab fi Akhbār man Dhahab</u>
<u>Tabaqāt</u>	As-Subkī, <u>Tabaqāt ash-Shāfi'iyya al-kubrā</u> .
<u>Tabṣīr</u>	Al-Isfarā'īnī, <u>At-Tabṣīr fi-ad-Dīn</u>
<u>Tarājim</u>	Maqdisī, <u>Tarājim Rijāl al-Qarnayn</u>
<u>Wafayāt</u>	Ibn-Khallikān, <u>Wafayāt al-A'yān</u>
<u>Wāfī</u>	aṣ-Ṣafadī, <u>al-Wāfī bil-Wafayāt</u>
<u>'Utbi</u>	<u>al-Tārīkh al-Yamīnī</u>
<u>'Uyūn</u>	Ibn-Abī-Uṣaybi'a, <u>'Uyūn al-Anbā' fi Tabaqāt al-Aṭibbā'</u>

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is an attempt to investigate the history and to expound the theological doctrines of one of the Muslim sects, namely the Karrāmiyya. This sect was founded by Abū 'Abd-Allah Muḥammad Ibn-Karrām in the third century A.H., and its adherents continued as a distinct group among the Sunnite Muslims for nearly three centuries.

In dealing with any of the early Muslim sects, however, one is confronted with various difficulties and many problems. The very definition of a group as a sect in the heresiographers' works must be taken with caution; because the heresiographers in their classification of the sects were largely influenced by the Tradition of the Prophet, in which he foretold that his community would be divided into seventy-three sects. There is also the problem of whether these views ascribed to certain sects were the real doctrines upheld by the sect's followers or whether they were distorted and misrepresented by their opponents. Moreover there is no certainty that those heresiographers were neutral in recording the sect's views, or that they were not influenced by their own sectarian partisanship and affiliation and their personal interest in ascribing certain tenets to certain groups or sects either to discredit or to honour them.

These difficulties and problems are well exemplified in the case of the Karrāmiyya sect. We will see in the course of this study how the heresiographers differed regarding the classification of the

sect and that they ascribed to the Karrāmites views which they did not uphold. In the case of the Karrāmiyya sect, those problems were aggravated and the treatment of the history and doctrines of the sect were rendered more difficult by two factors: Firstly, the sect's existence has been neglected by many historians, and those who mentioned them gave very scant and insufficient information. Secondly as for the doctrines of the sect there is no extant work of the Karrāmite scholars which would have presented their doctrine from their own point of view. These factors make it difficult for the student of the sect to trace its historical existence and development on one hand; and on the other they leave him dependent, on his evaluation of the Karrāmite doctrines, upon the works of the sect's opponents or advocates which are often partial and of a polemical nature.

A special reference is made, in this thesis, to ar-Rāzī's involvement with the Karrāmites and to his criticism of their doctrines for two reasons: (1) After ar-Rāzī's death we find no trace of the Karrāmites either as individual thinkers or as a collective body. Therefore it seems that ar-Rāzī witnessed the last phase of the sect's existence. (2) Ar-Rāzī who, as an Ash'arite theologian holds opposite views to those of the Karrāmiyya, engaged in conflict and disputations with the sect's adherents. Thus he thoroughly examined the sect's views and preserved, in his works, material concerning the Karrāmite doctrines which is not available in other sources. Therefore, by referring in particular to ar-Rāzī's criticism we are hoping to make a comparison between the Karrāmite views and those

of the Ash'arite on one hand, and on the other to find out to what extent ar-Rāzī was fair in his treatment of the sect's views. This might also help in promoting an understanding of the whole objective of the thesis.

The first chapter of this work is devoted to the study of ar-Rāzī's life from his birth until his involvement with the Karrāmites.

The second chapter is concerned with the origin and the history of the Karrāmiyya sect. In this chapter the history of the sect is traced back to its founder Muḥammad Ibn-Karrām. The various aspects of his life and movement as well as his significance and achievement are considered. The chapter also deals with the history of the sect after the death of its founder. We follow the sect's adherents as scholars and as a collective body in Jerusalem and Khurāsān, and their role in the Ghaznavid Empire and the Ghurid sultanate.

In the following chapters we examine the theological doctrines of the sect. The third chapter outlines the sect's views regarding the nature of God. In the first section of this chapter we have treated the problem of the Essence of God, and tried to find out the motive behind the sect's anthropomorphic views, and to what extent Ibn-Karrām's views were different from those of his followers regarding this problem. The second section of this chapter is a discussion of the sect's views concerning God being the locus of temporal phenomena and the problem of His attributes. The sect's theory of the origination and annihilation of the world is discussed

in the third section.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the study of the problems of free will and predestination, the criterion of good and bad and whether or not it is incumbent upon God to do what is good for human beings.

The fifth chapter is concerned with the study of the sect's views regarding the problem of faith. The similarities between these and those of the Murji'ites are outlined.

The problems of prophecy and the sinlessness of the prophets are dealt with in the sixth chapter. Here the sect's views concerning the nature of prophecy and whether it is acquired or bestowed by God, as well as the Karrāmites' distinction between rasūl and mursal are analysed.

In compiling this thesis we have relied on sources of different natures. There are those works related to the study of ar-Rāzī's life, others are relative to the history of the Karrāmiyya, and some are connected with the theological doctrines of the sect. My intention here is not to criticize or evaluate these works, but rather to give brief notes on their treatment of the aspects related to this subject.

(1) Sources for the biography of ar-Rāzī.

As for the biography of ar-Rāzī, we have mainly relied on the following biographical works arranged according to their chronological order:

Kitāb Tārīkh al-Ḥukamā' by Jamāl ad-Dīn Abū-L-Ḥasan Ibn-Yusuf al-Qiftī (568-646/1171-1248).

Tarājim Rijāl al-Qarnayn, written by Abū-Shāma Shihāb ad-Dīn Abū-Muḥammad al-Maqdisī (d. 665/1266).

'Uyūn al-Anbā' fī Ṭabaqāt al-Aṭibbā', by Muwaffaq ad-Dīn Abū-L- 'Abbas Aḥmad Ibn-L-Qāsim Ibn Abī-Uṣaybi'a (600-668/1203-1270).

Wafayāt al-A'yān wa-Anbā' az-Zamān by Abū-L- 'Abbās Aḥmad Ibn-Khallikān (608-681/1211-1282).

Al-Wāfī bil-Wafayāt, by Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn Khalīl Ibn-Aybak as-Ṣafadī (716 or 17-764).

Ṭabaqāt ash-Shāfi'iyya al-Kubrā by Tāj ad-Dīn as-Subkī (727-771/1327-70).

Shadharāt adh-Dhahab fī-Akḥbār man Dhahab by Abū-L-Fataḥ 'Abd-al-Hayy Ibn-al-'Imād al-Ḥanbalī (d. 1089/1678).

Although these works differ from each other in giving fewer or more details of ar-Rāzī's life, they all pay more attention to its later phase and almost neglect his early years. The importance of al-Qiftī's work lies in its being the earliest source. Those of as-Subkī and Ibn-Abī-Uṣaybi'a give more details and preserve a text of ar-Rāzī's will; they also give some information concerning his family. Ar-Rāzī's work al-Munāẓarāt is of great value it gives a record of ar-Rāzī's travels in Transoxania.

(2) Sources for the biography of Ibn-Karrām and the history of his sect.

As for the biography of Ibn-Karrām we have relied upon the following sources:

Kitāb al-Ansāb, by Tāj ad-Dīn Abū-Sa'īd as-Sam'ānī (506-62/

1112-66). This work provides us with some information about the origin from which the word Karrām was derived, and tells us about the origin of Ibn-Karrām and where he was born. It also gives a biography of one of the Karrāmite scholars, namely Abū-Ya'qūb Is'hāq Ibn-Mā^hshādh. Other sources for Ibn-Karrām's biography are the Tabaqāt of as-Subkī and al-Wāfī of aṣ-Ṣafadī previously mentioned. As-Subkī's work provides us with a discussion of the origin of Ibn-Karrām's name, with other information about Ibn-Karrām's life.

Two of the sources which give biography of Ibn-Karrām are Mizān al-I'tidāl fi Naqd al-Rijāl by Abd-Allah Aḥmad Ibn-'Uthmān adh-Dhahabī and Lisān al-Mizān by Shihāb ad-Dīn Abū-L-Faḍl Aḥmad Ibn-Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī. Both these works were concerned with men connected with Tradition, therefore adh-Dhahabī supplies us with information concerning this aspect of Ibn-Karrām, and Ibn-Ḥajar practically repeats the material given by adh-Dhahabī.

Kitāb al-Uns al-Jalīl bi Tārīkh al-Quds wa-L-Khalīl by Abū-L-Yumn Qāḍī Mujīr ad-Dīn al-'Ulamī-al-Ḥanbalī, provides us with some information concerning Ibn-Karrām's life in Jerusalem.

Aḥsan at-Taqāsīm fi Ma'rifat al-Aqālīm by Shams ad-Dīn Abū-'Abd-Allah Muḥammad Ibn-Aḥmad al-Maqdisī is of great value for the history of the sect after the death of Ibn-Karrām. It supplies us with useful information about the Karrāmite groups scattered in different regions visited by this geographer.

At-Tārīkh al-Yamīnī written by Abū-Naṣr Muḥammad Ibn-'Abd-al-Jabbār al-'Utbī (d. 427/1036 or 431/1039-40) informs us concerning the history of the Karrāmites in Khurāsān, particularly

their relation with the Ghaznavids.

'Izz-ad-Dīn Ibn-al-Athīr (555-630/1160-1234) provides us, in his work Al-Kāmil fi-t-Tārīkh, with valuable information about the Karrāmites' history in the Ghūr region, and their conflict with Fakhr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī.

(3) Sources for the theological doctrines of the sect.

As for those works which deal with the theological doctrines of the Karrāmiyya sect they might be divided into two kinds

1) Heresiographical works, (2) Works of theology.

Heresiography.

Among the early heresiographical works in which reference is made to the sect's doctrine is Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn of al-Ash'arī (d. 935). In this work al-Ash'arī recorded the Karrāmite views without commentary, mentioning only the sect's views regarding the problem of faith and classifying the sect among the Murj'ite groups.

Another heresiographical work which dealt with the sect's doctrines is Al-Farq bayn al-Firaq of 'Abd-al-Qāhir Ibn-Ṭāhir al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1037). The importance of al-Baghdādī's work lies in the fact that he derived some of his information concerning the Karrāmite doctrines from one of Ibn-Karrām's books called 'Adhāb al-Qabr from which al-Baghdādī gave some extracts. Thus al-Baghdādī unlike al-Ash'arī, was able to give some views of the sect concerning various theological problems. But the defect of al-Baghdādī, in dealing with the Karrāmite doctrines shows itself in that he, overcome by his sectarian bias, engaged himself in the refutation of the sect's views and often his statements turned

into polemics.

Among those heresiographical works in which some of the sect's views have been mentioned is Al-Fiṣal fi-L-Milal wa-L-Ahwā' wa-n-Niḥal of Ibn-Ḥazm (d. 456/1064). It, however, contains less information about the Karrāmite doctrines than those mentioned in al-Baghdādī's work. Moreover Ibn-Ḥazm does not seem to be acquainted with any of the Karrāmites' works.

One of the heresiographical works which deals with the Karrāmite doctrines is At-Tabṣīr fi d-Dīn by Abū-L-Muẓaffar al-Isfarā'īnī (d. 471). The section of this work dealing with the sect's views is almost a summary of that of al-Baghdādī's Farq with some addition. His method in the treatment of the sect resembles that of al-Baghdādī.

In his heresiographical work Al-Milal wa-n-Niḥal, ash-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153) mentioned the same views of Ibn-Karrām which had been ascribed to him by al-Baghdādī and al-Isfarā'īnī, but ash-Shahrastānī supplies us with more details about the views of various Karrāmite sub-sects. In the Milal there is also much more information about the Karrāmite views concerning God being the locus of originated things. Moreover ash-Shahrastānī appeared to be acquainted with the views of the Karrāmite scholar Ibn-L-Hayṣm. He acknowledged Ibn-L-Hayṣam's attempts to correct Ibn-Karrām's views, and pointed out the changes brought about by him.

Fakhr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī gave an accurate account of the sect's main trends, in his work I'tiqādāt Firq al-Muslimīn wa-L-Mushrikīn, but the information given was rather scant.

Works of Theology.

Although the aims of the theological works are mainly polemic, they provided us with valuable information about the sect's theological doctrines. Here we would like to mention in particular al-Baghādādī's work Uṣūl ad-Dīn, al-Juwaynī's Al-Irshād, al-Ghazālī's Al-Iqtisād fi-l-'itiqād, ash-Shahrastani's Nihayat al-Iqdām and ar-Rāzī's works such as: Asās at-Taqdīs, Al-Arba'īn, Al-Muhāsṣal and Ma'ālim Uṣūl ad-Dīn. As far as the Karrāmites' views are concerned the value of these books varies. In ar-Rāzī's works, in particular, much time is devoted to the review and discussion of the sect's doctrines, and they contain some material found in no other sources.

The Hanafite scholar al-Bazdawī (421-439 A.H.) provides us in his work Uṣūl ad-Dīn with some information about the sect's theological doctrines especially their views regarding the active attributes of God, and their arguments concerning the problem of faith. Al-Ījīs's work, Al Mawāqif, and those of Ibn-Ṭaymiyya such as Kitāb al-Īmān, Minhāj as-Sunna and Muwāfaqat Ṣaḥiḥ al-Manqūl are indispensable for an understanding of the sects views, but their dependence on second hand information reduces their values.

Modern Works.

Concerning modern works which deal with the Karrāmiyya, the section on the sect in Louis Massignon: Essai les Origines du Lexique Technique de la Mystique Musulmane, is of great value for the biographies of Ibn-Karrām and his followers as well as for the

sect's doctrines.

The section on the Karrāmiyya in C.E. Bosworth: The Ghaznavids, and his articles "The Rise of the Karrāmiyya in Khurāsān" in the Muslim World Vol. 1 (1960) and "The Early Islamic History of Ghūr" in C.A.J. Vol. 6 (1961) are indispensable for the history of the Karrāmiyya. They provide us with valuable information about the history of the sect, and supply us with some material found in Persian sources.

CHAPTER I

The Life of ar-Rāzī and His Involvement with
the KarrāmitesHis Life and Birth

His full name is Abū-'Abd-Allah Muḥammad Ibn-'Umar Ibn-al-Ḥusayn Ibn-'Ali ar-Rāzī.¹ He is well known as Fakhr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī and is often called Ibn-Khaṭīb ar-Rayy or Ibn-al-Khaṭīb, which came to him from his father's profession as a preacher in Rayy. In his later age, ar-Rāzī got the title Shaykh al-Islām while he was in Herāt.² Ar-Rāzī lived in the sixth and the early years of the seventh centuries A.H. He was born, according to some of his biographers, on the 25th of Ramaḍān, in the year 543/6 March, 1149³ or 544/27 February, 1150.⁴ His birth place was Rayy, a town of fame and importance before and at the time of his birth.⁵ It gave its name to many distinguished scholars and philosophers, among whom was the well known philosopher Abū-Bakr Muḥammad Ibn-Zakariyya ar-Rāzī (d. 923 or 932 A.D.) and also Fakhr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī the subject of our study.

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1. Ibn-Khallikān, Wafayāt, Vol. 1. p. 600, Maqdisī, Tarājim Rijāl al-Qarnayn, p. 68. Ibn-Abī-Uṣaybi'a, 'Uyūn al-Anbā', Vol. 2, p. 23.
 2. Tabaqāt ash-shāfi'iyya, Vol. 5, p. 35.
 3. Wafayāt, Vol. 1, p. 600; Tabaqāt, Vol. 5, p. 35. Only Ibn-Khallikān gave the date of the day.
 4. Ḥukamā', p. 92; Shadharāt, Vol. 5, p. 21. Wāfī, Vol. 4, p. 25.
 5. V. Minorsky, E.I.¹, Vol. III, art. "Rayy", pp. 1105-1107.

His Family

Ar-Rāzī was born in a family of scholars and learned men. His father Abū-l-Qāsim 'Umar Ibn-l-Ḥusayn, who was known as Khaṭīb ar-Rayy and preserved the title Diyā'-ad-Dīn, was a distinguished scholar and prominent figure in Rayy.¹ He studied fiqh and occupied himself with the study of khilāf and usūl al-fiqh until he became distinguished and set a rare example in these fields.²

Ar-Rāzī's father was a follower of the Ash'arite school of theology and the Shāfi'ite school of fiqh; the links of his masters in these subjects goes back to the founders of the schools, i.e. al-Ash'arī and ash-Shāfi'ī respectively. He took Tradition from the well-known Traditionist Muhyī-as-Sunna al-Baghawī (d. 516/1123)³ and theology from Abū-l-Qāsim al-Anṣārī (d. 511 or 512). The pupil of Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085).⁴ It is said that ar-Rāzī's father compiled several works on usūl al-fiqh, theology and preaching as well as other subjects; one of these works called Ghāyat-ul-Murām, consists of two volumes; its subject was theology and it was highly admired by as-Subkī.⁵ Ar-Rāzī's

1. Tabaqāt, Vol. 4, p. 285.

2. 'Uyūn, Vol. 2, p. 25.

3. Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn Ibn-Mas'ūd al-fārā' al-Marwazī, the author of at-Tahdhīb, Traditionist, mufassir and Jurist.

Tabaqāt, Vol. 4, pp. 214-16.

4. Tabaqāt, Vol. 4, pp. 222/23.

5. Tabaqāt, Vol. 4, pp. 285-6.

father has been described as being eloquent and powerful in preaching, renowned and distinguished in fiqh, well known as a Traditionist and theologian and a man of letters.¹

Another member of ar-Rāzī's family of which some information has reached us, was his only and elder brother Rukn-ad-Dīn, who has been described as being rash, thoughtless and often mentally deranged. He had, however, grasped some knowledge of theology and uṣūl al-fiqh, but he had no reputation for learning. He showed great dislike for his brother Fakhr ad-Dīn and used to follow him wherever he went, slandering him, and depreciating those who occupied themselves with the study of his brother's works. When ar-Rukn became so troublesome and caused his brother embarrassment, the latter requested the sultan Khwārizm-Shah to confine ar-Rukn in some remote castle and put restrictions on his movements. The request was complied with, and thus ar-Rukn ended the rest of his life.

His education

In such a family, ar-Rāzī was brought up and educated. With his father he studied fiqh and theology in their shāfi'ite's and Asha'rite's versions. In one of his works called Tahṣīl al-Ḥaqq which is believed to be on theology, ar-Rāzī mentioned that he studied theology with his father who was the pupil of Abū-l-Qāsim

1. 'Uyūn, Vol. 2, pp. 25-6.

Sulaymān Ibn-Nāṣir al-Anṣārī, who was the pupil of Imām al-Ḥarāmāyn al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085) and thus the chain of the masters goes back to al-Ash'arī. Similarly he stated that he studied fiqh with his father who in this field was the pupil of Abū-Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn Ibn-Mas'ūd al-Farā' al-Baghawī, and thus the chain of the masters goes back to al-Imām ash-Shāfi'ī.¹

After the death of his father, of which no definite date was given, ar-Rāzī left Rayy and went to Samnān,² where he joined al-Kamāl as-Samnānī with whom ar-Rāzī studied fiqh.³ Aṣ-Ṣafadī, however, mentioned that the master of ar-Rāzī after the death of his father was a scholar called at-Ṭabasī who wrote a book known as Al-Ḥāyiz fī 'ilm ar-Rawḥānī (the comprehensive book on The Spiritual Knowledge).⁴ So far nothing is known about al-kamāl as-Samnānī, apart from his being a prominent scholar in fiqh. At-Ṭabasī, however, is an unknown figure; the title of his book, suggests that he might be a mystic or preacher, and so ar-Rāzī might have studied with him one of these subjects.

From Samnān, ar-Rāzī returned to Rayy, where he continued his study with another scholar on different subjects. Ar-Rāzī's master in Rayy, was al-Mājid al-Jīlī with whom he studied philosophy and theology. He attended al-Jīlī's lectures in Rayy, and when the

1. Wafayāt, Vol. 1. p. 602; Tash-kupri Zada, Miftāḥ as-Sa'āda, Vol. 1. p. 446.

2. Samnān was a town in Qumas region, located between Damghān and Ghūr of Rayy, Ibn-al-Athīr, al-Lubāb, Vol. 1, p. 565.

3. Ṭabaqāt, Vol. 5, p. 35.

4. Wāfī, Vol. 4, p. 249.

master was invited to teach and preach at Maragha, ar-Rāzī accompanied him and remained there for a long time studying the same subjects.¹ Al-Jīlī has been described as one of the great scholars of his time, remarkably distinguished in philosophy and theology and compiled many works on these subjects.² Al-Jīlī was also the teacher of the sūfi-philosopher Shihāb ad-Dīn as-Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl the founder of the illuminist (ishrāqīya) school of philosophy and mysticism, who was executed in 587/1191 for his heretical views.³

It is said that ar-Rāzī spent some time at a school in Martad, where he studied fiqh with one of its Jurists.⁴ But neither the time nor the name of the master with whom he studied at Martad, was given. According to Ibn l-Qiftī however, after ar-Rāzī studied 'Ulūm al-Awā'il', and after acquiring a considerable mastery in uṣūl al-fiqh, he went to Khurāsān, where he occupied himself with the study of the works of al-Fārābī and ibn-Sīnā, from which he benefited a lot.⁵ The exact places in Khurāsān, and the persons who taught ar-Rāzī these philosophical works, have not been mentioned.

As a student ar-Rāzī was described as being diligent, industrious and hard-working. These merits were combined with an

1. Ṭabaqāt, Vol. 5. p. 35.

2. 'Uyūn', Vol. 2, p. 23; Wāfī, Vol. 4, p. 249.

3. Shadharāt, Vol. 4, pp. 290-91.

4. Wāfī, Vol. 4, p. 249.

5. Hukamā', p. 291.

indefatigable determination to acquire knowledge and to master the various branches of learning. His travels in pursuit of knowledge gave him a first hand information in certain fields and show his eagerness and desire for knowledge. It is mentioned that ar-Rāzī said: "By God, I regret the time I have spent in eating instead in the pursuit of learning, for Time is precious."¹ Ar-Rāzī had a remarkable memory. It is believed that he learnt by heart and committed to memory Imām al-Ḥaramayn's volume on theology entitled Ash-Shāmil, al-Ghazālī's book on uṣūl al-fiqh entitled Al-Muṣṭaṣfa as well as Al-Mu'tamad of Abū-'l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī the Mu'tazilite.²

With this intellectual capacity and disposition, ar-Rāzī was able not only to be acquainted with all the science of his time but also to master several branches of knowledge. He was an expert in fiqh, uṣūl al-fiqh, theology and philosophy, and was an authority on both Arabic and Persian languages and literatures. He studied medicine and history and wrote works on both the subjects. He was acquainted with geometry, astrology, physiognomy (firāsa) and mineralogy, and it is believed that he had made an unsuccessful research on alchemy. In all these branches of knowledge, it is said that ar-Rāzī had compiled works. His extant works which vary from theology, philosophy and uṣūl al-fiqh, to

1. 'Uyūn, Vol. 2, p. 23.

2. Ṭabaqāt, Vol. 5, p. 35; Mir'at, Ms.

alchemy and medicine clearly demonstrate his encyclopaedic knowledge. His commentary on the Qur'ān called Mafātīh al-Ghayb or At-Tafsīr al-Kabīr, is viewed by his critics as being inclusive of everything except tafsīr,¹ and by his advocates as having all possible details of knowledge in addition to tafsīr.² This is because ar-Rāzī has dealt in it with all aspects of Muslim intellectual activity and demonstrated in it his prolific knowledge. Ar-Rāzī has been described by aṣ-Ṣafadī as one who has a unique combination of many gifts: "He had ability to express himself, sound mind, knowledge which knew no bounds, an all embracing memory, and he had all his proofs and examples at his finger-tips".³ It has been said that he was careful in dealing with the questions of fiqh, theology and philosophy.⁴

His Travels

Having completed his study and mastering both Islamic and philosophical subjects, ar-Rāzī set out on travels. From the statements of ar-Rāzī's biographers, as well as from his own account, it seems that he had almost covered the Eastern part of the Islamic empire, and travelled through the area extending from Khurāsān, Khwārizm and Transoxania to Ghazna and India.⁵ He first went to

1. Wāfī, Vol. 4, p. 254.

2. Ibid., Vol. 4, p. 254.

3. Wāfī, Vol. 4, p. 248.

4. 'Uyūn, Vol. 2, p. 23.

5. Ar-Rāzī, Munāẓarāt, p. 1.

Khawārizm, where he engaged in disputations with the Mu'tazilites who, according to Goldziher, were at that time in majority in that region.¹ After bitter debates with the Mu'tazilites, ar-Rāzī was expelled from Khawārizm but no reason has been given so far for his expulsion. It is possible, however, that he was expelled because of his harsh and severe criticism of his opponents, and that the highest abilities he had displayed during his disputation,² roused the scholars of Khawārizm and their followers against him.

After this unsuccessful journey in Khawārizm, ar-Rāzī went to Transoxania (Māwarā' an-Nahr).³ It seems, however, that ar-Rāzī visited the region of Transoxania twice: The first journey, which has been mentioned by al-Qiftī, took place when ar-Rāzī was a student wandering in search of knowledge.⁴ Ar-Rāzī's second visit to the region took place when he was an authority on philosophy and some of his philosophical works were part of the curriculum in the region.⁵

Concerning this latter visit to Transoxania, ar-Rāzī has left a full and elaborate account of the places he visited, the people with whom he has discussions, and the subjects he discussed. All this has been clearly stated in his work entitled al-Munāẓarāt.

1. Der Islam, Vol. iii (1912), p. 222; Ṭabaqāt, Vol. 5, p. 35.

2. Wafayāt, Vol. 1, p. 6.

3. Ṭabaqāt, Vol. 5, p. 35; Wāfī, Vol. 4, p. 249.

4. Hukamā', p. 291.

5. Munāẓarāt, p. 60.

From al-Munāẓarāt we know that ar-Rāzī visited the towns of Bukhārā and Samarqand; and had disputations with the scholars of these towns. In Bukhārā he met ar-Raḍī an-Nīshāpūrī who, according to Ibn-Abi-al-Wafā', was one of the great scholars of his time, and was known for his dialectical method - called the "Raḍawiyya method".¹ Ar-Rāzī though found him a man of integrity but dull of understanding.² Of the same town was an-Nūr-aṣ-Ṣābūnī,³ who claimed himself to be a leading scholar in theology and basic dogma ('aqā'id). In a debate with him, ar-Rāzī completely confused and perplexed him, and he beseeched ar-Rāzī not to reveal his ignorance and short-comings in theology.⁴ Another scholar from Bukhārā was ar-Rukn al-Qazwīnī,⁵ the pupil of ar-Raḍī an-Nīshāpūrī who was described by ar-Rāzī as one of the most distinguished students of ar-Raḍī.⁶ Ar-Rāzī had also discussion in Bukhārā with Sharaf-ad-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn-Muḥammad al-Mas'ūdī, who was the renowned philosopher of the town. But to ar-Rāzī's surprise, "he was a short tempered man, who got furious and irritated by any objection to his arguments or views. Moreover, in addition to that he was a blind follower of al-Ghazālī and accepted all that al-Ghazālī

1. Al-Jawāhir al-Muḍī'a. Vol. 2, p. 370.

2. Munāẓarāt. p. 1; Trans. p. 29.

3. His full name was Aḥmad Ibn-Muḥammad Ibn-Bakr aṣ-Ṣābūnī, well distinguished theologian, died on the 15th of Ṣafar, 580/1184.

See al-Jawāhir al-Muḍī'a, Vol. 1. p. 124.

4. Munāẓarāt, pp. 14, 17, 23-24.

5. Al-Jawāhir al-Muḍī'a, Vol. 2, p. 370.

6. Munāẓarāt, p. 24.

said and wrote."¹ In Samarqand ar-Rāzī met al-Farīd al-Ghaylānī, who, it is said, was a great philosopher and well known for his staunch criticism of Ibn-Sīnā, and particularly his theory of the eternity of the world. He wrote a treatise on this subject. Ar-Rāzī refuted the proofs which al-Ghaylānī put forth against the views of Ibn-Sīnā.²

After his involvement in these relentless disputations with the scholars of Transoxania, ar-Rāzī was forced to leave the region. No explicit reasons have been given here, but it seems that the same reasons, which led to ar-Rāzī's expulsion from Khwārizm - that is, the harshness of his arguments, the jealousy of the scholars, and blind acceptance of masses the prevalent beliefs - made him to leave Transoxania. In his al-Munāẓarāt, ar-Rāzī mentioned that in one of his debates with ar-Raḍī an-Nīshāpūrī, about four hundred of the latter's followers were present in listening the discussion, feeling himself corned and humiliated, ar-Raḍī instigated his followers to make trouble and disturbance. The disruption was averted at ar-Rāzī's appeal to ar-Raḍī that he should not give up his good behaviour, and not to defame his reputation of being just and fair in the treatment of his opponents.³ A similar event occurred in one of ar-Rāzī's debates with an-Nūr aṣ-Ṣābūnī.⁴ It is possible

1. Ibid., pp. 31-36, 42-43.

2. Ibid., pp. 59-62.

3. Ibid., p. 57.

4. Ibid., p. 14.

that such events led to ar-Rāzī's expulsion from Transoxania.

His relation with the Ghūrid Sultans

From Transoxania ar-Rāzī returned to his native town Rayy, and from there it is believed he entered into relations with the Ghūrid Sultans. The Ghūrid sultanate emerged in the 6th/12th century from the Ghūr region, the centre of what is known now as Afghānistān.¹ At the time ar-Rāzī approached the Ghūrid court, the Ghūrid sultanate had reached the peak of its strength under the rule of the two brothers Ghiyāth ad-Dīn of Ghūr (d. 599/1202) and shihāb ad-Dīn of Ghazna (569-602/1173-1206), and was the great single power on the Eastern part of the Islamic World. These two brothers, especially Ghiyāth ad-Dīn, were great patrons of Arts and literature, and were extremely generous towards men of letters, and scholars were favourites in their court.²

It is said that ar-Rāzī first came into contact with the Ghūrid Court, through the younger brother Shihāb ad-Dīn of Ghazna, who had borrowed an amount of money from ar-Rāzī and to pay him this debt shihāb ad-Dīn invited him to visit his court in Ghazna, and there it is said, ar-Rāzī enjoyed the favour and the generosity of shihāb-ad-Dīn.³ Then ar-Rāzī joined the courts of the Sultan Ghiyāth ad-Dīn at Firūzkūh and Herāt. He was warmly welcomed and received by the Sultan; and a special school was built for him in Herāt.

1. Bosworth, Cambridge History of Irān, Vol. 5, p. 160.

2. C.E. Bosworth, E.I.², ii, art. "Ghorids", pp. 1099-1104.

3. Tabaqāt, Vol. 5, p. 35.

But, as we will see in the next chapter, the Ghūr region was largely dominated by the followers of the Karrāmiyya sect. And the teaching and doctrines of the sect were for a long time deeply rooted in the region, and had great influence on the public. At the same time, ar-Rāzī was an Ash'arite theologian and philosopher, and we will see later from his criticism of the Karrāmite doctrines that he was an opponent of the Karrāmite's teachings. The Karrāmites on their part also considered him as their bitter opponent and arch-enemy. Therefore by having a school in which he taught in public and refuted the doctrines of the Karrāmites, ar-Rāzī came into an open clash with the adherents of the sect. The Karrāmites saw in the favour given to ar-Rāzī by the Sultan a real threat to their position and influence in the court. The school of ar-Rāzī represented a direct danger to their teachings, especially when ar-Rāzī succeeded in attracting large audiences, and in converting some Karrāmites to his Ash'arite doctrines.

Realizing the danger presented by ar-Rāzī's teachings and his position in the court, the Karrāmites resolved to expel him from the court and prevent him from holding public lectures. So they started opposing, repudiating his views, and did not hesitate even to use any calumny to discredit him. They found an opportunity to achieve their aims, in an event which took place, according to Ibn-al-Athīr, in the year 595/1199.¹ In this year, Ibn-al-Athīr says: "a dangerous riot (fitna) occurred at Firūzkūh where the

1. I.A. Vol. 12, pp. 70-71.

Sultan Ghiyāth ad-Dīn had his headquarters. In a theological disputation which took place in the presence of the Sultan and was attended by scholars from the Karrāmite sect, and the Shafi'ite and Hanafite schools, Fakhr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī met the head of the Karrāmites, al-Qādī Majd ad-Dīn 'Abd-al-Mājid Ibn 'umar known as Ibn-al-Qudwa, who was the follower of the Haysamiyya sub-sect and was highly respected by the Karrāmites for his piety, learning and nobility. Ar-Rāzī started the disputation and when Ibn-al-Qudwa objected to what he had said, ar-Rāzī attacked him and severely criticized the heretical and ill-expressed doctrines of the Karrāmites, and even hurled abuses at Ibn-al-Qudwa. The cousin and son-in-law of the Sultan, called Diyā' ad-Dīn who was a patron of the Karrāmites and an opponent of ar-Rāzī, complained to the Sultan of ar-Rāzī's harsh treatment of Ibn-al-Qudwa, and the rude language he used. He also accused ar-Rāzī of being Zindīq and follower of the philosophers. The Sultan, however, paid no attention to the complaint and the accusations against ar-Rāzī. But the following day the situation got worse; the followers of the Karrāmite sect assembled in the mosque, where they were addressed by Ibn-al-Qudwa. Ibn-al-Qudwa started by expressing his sincerity and loyalty to the Sunna of the prophet. At the same time he attacked the philosophy of Aristotle and that of al-Fārābī and Ibn-Sīnā as being heresy, and repudiated those who followed them (referring to ar-Rāzī). Then Ibn-al-Qudwa emotionally recorded the event which happened the previous day,

and bitterly wept at the end of his speech. This dramatic presentation roused the mob to riot.¹ The sultan who wished to support ar-Rāzī, feared that by publicly upholding him he might lose the popular support of the Ghūr people upon whom his military strength largely depended. Therefore to calm the situation, he promised that he would expel ar-Rāzī, and to avoid any further complications he ordered ar-Rāzī to leave Firūzkūh and to go to Herāt.²

In Herāt, however, life was not so easy and peaceful for ar-Rāzī. There, too, the majority of the town's inhabitants were Karrāmites,³ besides a great number of Ḥanbalites, who took the same position as the Karrāmites against ar-Rāzī. It is said that the Ḥanbalites in Herāt used to put lampoons full of abuses, scandals and curses on ar-Rāzī's pulpit. Once, while he was delivering his sermons, his attention was drawn to one of these papers which stated that his son was licentious and a fornicator and that his wife was an adulteress. Ar-Rāzī read the paper and replied by saying "this piece of paper states that my son is licentious and committed fornication. This is to be expected of youth, which is a kind of madness and we pray that God will guide him aright and accept his repentance. As for my wife, women are like that unless God makes them chaste. I am an old man who has

1. cf. Shadhārat, Vol. 4. pp. 318-19. Mir'āt, MS.

2. Bosworth, C.A.J. Vol. 6 (1961), p. 132.

3. I.A. Vol. 12, p. 71.

nothing to offer to women. Nothing, however, in this paper suggests that my son or my wife believe that God is a body or that they compare Him with any of His creatures. And so to me, I have never said that the Creator is a body and I have ~~never~~ likened Him to what He was created, nor ascribed to Him position in space."¹

Ar-Rāzī expressed his despair and frustration of life in Herāt in a poem, which it is said he addressed to the people of Herāt saying: "A man is despised as long as he lives, he is appreciated when he dies."² This shows how ar-Rāzī was badly ill-treated and neglected in Herāt. Because of this he left Herāt and went to Ghazna, hoping to find a more comfortable refuge and secure place to live in. In Ghazna ar-Rāzī was warmly received by the then Sultan Shihāb ad-Dīn of Ghazna, and was endowed with honour and respect. But this did not last for a long time, because a few years later the Sultan was assassinated immediately after his return from Nahavound in 602/1203.³ It is said that Shihāb ad-Dīn was murdered by some of the unbelievers, who were against him for he killed many of them in the wars. It is also assumed that he was assassinated by the Bāṭinites, who feared that Shihāb ad-Dīn was going to destroy their centres in Khurāsān.⁴ But the Karrāmites tried to utilize the event against their old enemy,

1. Tabaqāt, Vol. 5, pp. 26-7; Wāfī, Vol. 4, p. 250.

2. Wafayāt, Vol. 1, p. 602.

3. I.A. Vol. 12, p. 98. Ṭabaqāt, Vol. 5, pp. 25-6.

4. I.A. Vol. 12, p. 99.

ar-Rāzī. So they accused him of being involved in the intrigue that led to the assassination of the Sultan. On hearing this allegation, the slaves of Shihāb ad-Dīn who were faithful to their master, got extremely angry and attempted to attack ar-Rāzī. He was saved by the protection of the Vizir Mu'ayid al-Mulk who arranged his escape to a place of safety.¹

His relation with Khwārizm-shah

After the death of the Sultan Shihāb ad-Dīn, the Ghūrīd dynasty began to decline and a decade later it finally collapsed. Realizing the potential end of the dynasty and after losing his protector Shihāb ad-Dīn, ar-Rāzī dissociated himself from the Ghūrīd Court and joined the court of Khwārizm-shah. Khwārizm-shah's dynasty arose in the 6th/12th century in the region of Khwārizm, it put an end to the Suljuq rule in Khurāsān and engaged with the Ghūrīd in an intensive war. After the defeat and decline of the latter, the Khwārizm-shah dynasty under the rule of the Sultan 'Alā' ad-Dīn Teksh Muḥammad became the potent and supreme power in the Eastern part of the Islamic Empire.² At this time of glory, ar-Rāzī came into contact with the Court of the Sultan 'Alā' ad-Dīn. According to his biographers, ar-Rāzī was warmly received with respect and honour by the Sultan Khwārizm-shah, who showed great consideration to him. It is said that the sultan

1. Ibn-Kathīr, al-Bidāya, Vol. 13, p. 43.

2. The Cambridge History of Iran, Vol. 5, p. 201.

gave ar-Rāzī the royal palace at Herāt to be his permanent residence,¹ and under the patronage of the Sultan a special school was built for ar-Rāzī. Khwārizm-shah used to come and attend his lectures, and ar-Rāzī compiled for him a book called Al-‘Ikhtiyārāt al-‘Alā’iyya.² Moreover, the Vizir of the Sultan called ‘Alā’ al-Mulk married the daughter of ar-Rāzī.³ In this environment of respect and honour, enjoying his position in the court of Khwārizm-shah and widespread reputation ar-Rāzī spent the rest of his life as teacher and preacher in Herāt.

His Death

Early in the year 606/1209 ar-Rāzī felt sick; it is believed that at the time he was in the town of Khwārizm.⁴ From there he returned to Herāt; on feeling that he was getting worse and realizing that his death is approaching, ar-Rāzī dictated his last will to his disciple Ibrāhīm Ibn-Abū-Bakr al-Isfarā’īnī, on Sunday, the 21st of Muharam, in the same year. A month later on the 1st of shawal 606/29th of March 1210 ar-Rāzī passed away.⁵

Of his will, our concern here is mainly with the part in which ar-Rāzī emphatically requested his disciples, the Sultan and his family, to keep the report of his death a secret and to tell no one about its occurrence, and to bury him in accordance with the

1. ‘Uyūn, Vol. 2, p. 26.

2. Ibn-Taymiyya, Majmū‘at ar-Rasā’il, p. 140.

3. ‘Uyūn, Vol. 2, p. 26.

4. Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 26.

5. Ibid., pp. 26-7.

Muslim practice, on the mountain of Muzdakhān near Herāt.¹ Whether due to this part of his will or to other reports, ar-Rāzī's death and burial became a subject of speculation and conjecture for his biographers. Most of the biographers maintained that ar-Rāzī's death resulted from poison given by the Karrāmites in his drink or food.² As to his burial, it is said that he was buried on the same day of his death, at the same place which he had requested. According to al-Qiftī, when ar-Rāzī died it was announced that he had been buried in the mountain in the neighbourhood of Herāt, but in fact, he was buried secretly in his house, and the reason for that was to prevent the mob of Herāt from ill-treating and mutilating his corpse, because ar-Rāzī was suspected of being negligent in matters concerning religion.³

Anawātī rejected both these assumptions - that ar-Rāzī was poisoned by the Karrāmites, and that he was buried secretly - as not likely to be true, because there is no evidence to support the first assumption, and also of the second one for ar-Rāzī's tomb is still visited and venerated at Herāt.⁴ It is true that there is no positive evidence to support these assumptions, but by considering the circumstances and the environment which surrounded ar-Rāzī, and which was full of hatred and envy, one tends not to reject these

1. Tabaqāt, Vol. 5, p. 38; 'Uyūn, Vol. 2, p. 28.

2. Shadharāt, Vol. 5, p. 21; Hukamā', p. 92; Tarājim, p. 68.
Mir'āt, MS. Wāfī, Vol. 4, p. 258.

3. Hukamā', p. 291.

4. G.C. Anawātī, E.I.², ii, art. "Fakhr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī", p. 752.

speculations about ar-Rāzī's death and burial so easily. Moreover, ar-Rāzī's emphasis in his will on being buried secretly, and of keeping his death a secret, indicates that he was afraid that his opponents - the Karrāmites and the Ḥanbalites - might ill-treat his remains.

From what has been said above, it is clear that, although ar-Rāzī enjoyed wide reputation and worldly success as a great scholar and philosopher, and had the protection and patronage of the great sultans and rulers of his time, he spent most of his life in conflict with the followers of the Karrāmiyya sect and similar groups. The Karrāmites used every tactic to defame ar-Rāzī, to repudiate and attack him. Ar-Rāzī, on his part, and as will be shown later in the discourse did his best to refute the Karrāmites' views and to demonstrate the falsity of their doctrines.

On the other hand, we find that other historians regarded the Karrāmiyya as a sub-sect or a branch of the Māzī's,¹ and to others they were one of the extremist Māzī's sub-sect.² al-Buhārī followed by al-Iṣṣarā'īn, however, considered the sect as one of the ghaybiyya groups,³ but they classified and treated them as a separate sect.⁴ Moreover, various and numerous sub-sects of the Karrāmiyya were mentioned by these historians, while al-Buhārī

1. Maḥal, p. 79.

2. Maḥal, p. 101; al-Buhārī, Ḥumayr, vol. 1, p. 102.

3. Maḥal, Ḥumayr, vol. 2, p. 111.

4. Maḥal, pp. 223-24. Maḥal, p. 69.

5. Maḥal, pp. 75, 223-225. Maḥal, p. 69.

CHAPTER II

The Origin and the History of the Karrāmiyya Sect

The Muslim heresiographers, in dealing with the sects were greatly influenced by their sectarian affiliation, partisan loyalty and personal interest. They were also influenced by the ḥadīth of the prophet that his community would be split in 73 sects. These elements led to the confusion about many sects found in the heresiographers' works, and to the distortion and misrepresentation of the views of these sects. This is exemplified in the Karrāmiyya sect. On the one hand, we find that ash-Shahrastānī included them among those whom he called ṣifātiyya such as the Ash'arites and ahl-al-Ḥadīth, who shared in ascribing attributes to God, though the Karrāmiyya went too far and fell in gross tajsīm.¹ On the other hand, we find that other heresiographers regarded the Karrāmiyya as a sub-sect or a branch of the Murji'a,² and to others they were one of the extremist Murji'ite sub-sect.³ Al-Baghdādī followed by al-Isfarā'īnī, however, considered the sect as one of the mushabbiha groups,⁴ but they classified and treated them as a separate sect.⁵ Moreover various and numerous sub-sects of the Karrāmiyya were mentioned by those heresiographers, while Baghdādī

1. Milal, p. 79.

2. Ash'arī, Maqālāt, p. 141; al-Jīlī, Ghunya, Vol. 1, p. 102.

3. Ibn-Ḥazm, Fīṣal, Vol. 2, p. 111.

4. Farq, pp. 228-9; Tabṣīr, p. 65.

5. Ibid., pp. 25, 215-225. Tabṣīr, p. 65.

and al-Isfarā'īnī mentioned the Ḥaqā'iqiyya, Ṭarā'iqiyya and Is'hāqiyya as the three Karrāmite sub-sects,¹ according to ash-Shahrastānī, the Karrāmite sub-sects amount to twelve, though the major ones are six - 'Ābidiyya, Nūniyya, Zuryāniyya, Is'hāqiyya, Wāhidiyya and Haysamiyya.²

This confused picture of the Karrāmiyya, however, might have been caused by the difference of aspects from which those heresiographers have dealt with the sect. Those who considered them mushabbiha, mujassima or one of the ṣifātiyya groups, were only concerned with the problems of the essence and attributes of God, while the others who were concerned with the problem of faith regarded them as a sub-sect of the Murji'a, since they share with them similar views on this problem.

The Founder of the Sect

The Karrāmiyya, as some other Muslim sects, was named after its founder, Muḥammad Ibn-Karrām, and his followers came to be known as the Karrāmites.

Ibn-Karrām's full name was Abū-'Abd-Allāh Muḥammad Ibn-Karrām Ibn-'Arrāf Ibn-Khizāna Ibn-al-Barā' as-Sājistānī an-Nīshāpūrī.³ Ibn-Karrām's name caused controversy among his biographers, who disputed whether his name was Karrām, Kirām, or Karām.

As-Sam'ānī favoured the first pronunciation, i.e. Karrām.

1. Ibid., p. 25, Ibid., p. 65.

2. Milal, pp. 79-80.

3. I.A. Vol. 7, p. 148; Az-Zabīdī, Tāj-al-ʿArūs, Vol. 9, p. 43.

To support his view he mentioned that Ibn-Karrām's father was a vine tender, therefore he was called al-Karrām, and his son Muḥammad came to be known as Ibn-Karrām.¹ In favouring this pronunciation, as-Sam'ānī was followed by az-Zabīdī,² 'Ulami³ as well as adh-Dhahabī; but the latter rejected as-Sam'ānī's explanation of the origin of the name. To him, as-Sam'ānī's view is doubtful and had no evidence to support it.⁴

Among those who seem to favour the pronunciation Kirām, was as-Subkī, who recorded a disputation about Ibn-Karrām's name, and quoted in support of his view the Karrāmite poet al-Bustī, who said in one of his eulogies of Ibn-Karrām:

Those people whom we do not find following Muḥammad Ibn-Kirām are not noble ones (Kirām).

The real fiqh is that of Abū-Ḥanīfa alone; and the real dogma (Dīn) is that of Muḥammad Ibn-Kirām.⁵

The Karrāmites themselves did not accept as-Sam'ānī's view. According to adh-Dhahabī, the Karrāmite theologian, Ibn-Hayṣam said that the name should be pronounced either Karām which means karama or Karam; or Kirām plural of Karīm (generous).⁶

It seems that the dispute about Ibn-Karrām's name, was in fact, a difference of opinion about the evaluation of Ibn-Karrām's himself; that his opponents tried to repudiate and debase him by showing his humble origin, while his followers tried to defend and show the nobility of their master's ancestors. The Karrāmites'

1. Sam'ānī, f. 477.

2. Az-Zabīdī, op.cit., Vol. 9, p. 43.

3. Uns al-Jalīl, Vol. 1, p. 262.

4. Mīzān, Vol. 4, p. 21.

5. Tabaqāt, Vol. 2, p. 35.

6. Mīzān, Vol. 4, p. 21.

view seems more likely, but the pronunciation Karrām became prevalent and commonly agreed upon among most writers.

Ibn Karrām's Life.

Information about Ibn Karrām's early life are very scant. It has been mentioned that he was born in Sijistān at Zaranj, about the year 190/805, and that he was of Arab origin, namely from the tribe of Banū-Nizār.¹ No mention of his family or the environment in which he was brought up is given by his biographers. Sources are silent about his early life, apart from that he had spent some time in Sijistān.

His Education

Little is known about Ibn-Karrām's education. There are no records of the date or the places where and when he started and pursued his learning. It is mentioned, however, that he studied Tradition and commentary on the Qur'ān,² and some names of the scholars with whom he came into contact were given. Therefore by giving a short outline of the places where those masters used to teach, and the subjects which they taught, we hope that something about Ibn-Karrām's education might be known.

According to his biographers, Ibn-Karrām left Sijistān and went to Khurāsān where he came in contact with the famous ascetic Abū-'Abd-Allah Aḥmad Ibn-Ḥarb (d. 234/850).³ But by that time Ibn-

1. Sam'ānī, f. 477.

2. Wāfī, Vol. 4, p. 375.

3. Sam'ānī, f. 477.

Karrām must have been old, since he was able to move about for learning. Thus if it is considered that the normal age of education began about eleven, then one is inclined to maintain that Ibn-Karrām had started his study in Sijistān before he came to Khurāsān. Concerning Ahmad Ibn-Ḥarb, however, it is said that he belonged to the Murji'ite sect, and is believed to have been an active propagator of the sect's doctrine. He was a Traditionist and made a visit to Baghdād where he taught this subject; nevertheless he was considered as an unreliable authority in this field, and narrated Tradition which had no foundation. With Ibn-Ḥarb, Ibn-Karrām learned asceticism and was introduced to the life of ascetics.¹ and the Karrāmites claimed to be Ibn-Ḥarb's followers.²

Another master of Ibn-Karrām is believed to be Ibrāhīm Ibn-Yusuf al-Makiyānī (d. 239 or 244),³ who was a Ḥanafite Jurist well-known for his scholarly gift among the Ḥanafites, and was the most learned man of his time in Balkh. He has been, however, accused of being Murji'ite, and for this reason Imām Mālik forbade him from attending his lectures. For the same reason, i.e. being Murji'ite, Ibn-Qutayba expelled al-Makiyānī from Balkh and then he went to Baghdād where he spent the rest of his life. Makiyānī was a Traditionist and considered as trustworthy narrator by

1. Tārīkh-Baghdād, Vol. 4, pp. 118-19; Ṭabaqāt, Vol. 2, p. 164. Mīzān, Vol. 1, p. 89.

2. Tārīkh-Baghdād, Vol. 4, p. 119.

3. His full name was Yusuf Ibn-Maymūn Ibn-Qudāma al-Balkhī al-Jawāhir al-Mudī'a, Vol. 1, p. 51.

Ibn-Ḥibān.¹

Among Ibn-Karrām's masters was mentioned Mālik Ibn-Sulaymān al-Harawī, who was the Qāḍī of Herāt, and was also described as being Murji'ite and a Traditionist as well. Though Ibn-Ḥibān considered him trustworthy, ad-Daraqutnī described him as being a weak authority in Tradition.² Of Ibn-Karrām's masters was mentioned 'Alī Ibn-Ḥajar as-Sa'dī who it is said was Imām in Tradition and died in 244,³ and Aḥmad Ibn-al-Azhar (d. 263) who was also a Traditionist.⁴

In the transmission of Tradition, Ibn-Karrām mainly depended on the authority of Muḥammad Ibn-Tamīm as-Sa'dī al-Faryābī, who was one of Ibn-Karrām's masters in this subject, and on the authority of Aḥmad Ibn-'Abd-Allāh al-Juwaybārī, or al-Jūbārī (d. 247). Both al-Juwaybārī, and al-Faryābī, were described as being liars, notorious fabricators of Tradition and inventors of chain of authority (isnād). It is said that they might have fabricated more than a thousand unauthentic Traditions. Moreover, al-Juwaybārī in particular was accused of complicity with Ibn-Karrām in fabricating Tradition according to the latter's wishes. Adh-Dhahābī gave an example of these Traditions which Ibn-Karrām related on the authority of Abu-Yaḥyā al-Mu'allim, on the authority of Ḥamīd Ibn-Anas that the Prophet says "from my community (umma) will

1. al-Jawāhir al-Muḍī'a, Vol. 1, pp. 51-52.

2. Lisān, Vol. 5, p. 4.

3. I.A. Vol. VII, p. 55.

4. Tārīkh Baghdād, Vol. 4, pp. 39-43.

appear a man called Abū-Ḥanīfa on whose hands God will revive my Sunna."¹

That is all we get from the biographers of Ibn-Karrām regarding his education and the scholars with whom he was associated. It is clear, however, from this scant information, that all Ibn-Karrām's masters were Traditionists with the exception of al-Makiyānī and al-Harawī who were Jurists as well. Most of them also have been described as being Murji'ite, such as Aḥmad Ibn-Ḥarb, or suspected of being so; that means that they held certain theological doctrines. From all this it might be concluded that Ibn-Karrām studied with those masters Traditions, fiqh (in its Ḥanafite version), and the Murji'ite theological views; and that he travelled in Nīshāpūr, Balkh, Herāt and possibly Juwaybār and Faryāb where his masters used to teach. It is natural that Ibn-Karrām's education should be mainly composed of Tradition, since he lived in the period in which the movement for studying and collecting Tradition had reached its zenith,² and that he was a contemporary of the two great imāms of Tradition namely Bukhārī (194/810 - d. 256/870) and Muslim (d. 261/875).

But certainly these were not the only aspects of the Intellectual activity of the period. Thus it might be asked whether Ibn-Karrām's education was only confined to these aspects or not? The surviving extracts from Ibn-Karrām's works do not support the first assumption, on the contrary they suggest that he was acquainted

1. Mīzān, Vol. 1. p. 106; Vol. 3, p. 494.

2. J. Robson, E.I.² Vol. III art. "Ḥadīth", p. 24.

with other aspects of knowledge. Al-Baghdādī had already noticed a similarity between some of Ibn-Karrām's views and those of the philosophers and the Magians.¹ As-Sam'ānī also pointed out the resemblance between Ibn-Karrām's concept of God and those of the Christian Jews and Hishām Ibn-al-Ḥakam.² Some modern scholars saw in certain aspects of Ibn-Karrām's theology an endeavour to work the Qur'ānic texts into certain parts of the Aristotalian philosophy.³ We are not suggesting that Ibn-Karrām studied philosophy, or that he came into contact with philosophical works, since we have no positive evidence to support such an assumption. But a critical study of Ibn-Karrām's views in the contexts of the time he lived in, might suggest his acquaintance with some philosophical ideas. Those ideas might possibly have passed to him through the contact with or through the work of the Mu'tazilites or other mutakallimūn such as Hishām Ibn-al-Ḥakam. Besides, Khurāsān being the crossroad of many cultural activities might have given Ibn-Karrām an opportunity to come across some aspects of these cultures.

The beginning of Ibn-Karrām's activity.

During his study, Ibn-Karrām showed a tendency and devotion towards ascetic life. So after he had finished his learning, and about the year 230/844 he went to Mecca, where he spent five years

1. Farq, p. 218.

2. Sam'ānī, f. 477.

3. Margoliouth (D.S.). E.I.¹ art. "Karrāmiyya", Vol. ii, p. 773.

in complete isolation as a Mujāwir.¹ After this period of hard discipline of worship and ascetic life, he returned (via Jerusalem) to Nīshāpūr, and then went to Sijistān, where it is related he sold all his possessions.²

In Sijistān and among his compatriots and own people, Ibn-Karrām started the propagation of his teachings. His teachings appealed to the people, and it has been said that a considerable number of the region's inhabitants followed him. The local governor of Sijistān got alarmed about the movement of Ibn-Karrām and tried to suppress him, but he failed to put restrictions on his activity. The local governor saw in Ibn-Karrām's movement potential political danger. The ulema saw in it a deviation from Sunnism; therefore they prosecuted him. To avoid any danger the governor expelled him from Sijistān on the pretext that he was an innovator. It has been said that Ibn-Karrām's prosecutors demanded that he should be executed for his heretical beliefs. The governor feared Ibn-Karrām's piety; and that his execution might cause some trouble, rejected the demands of Ibn-Karrām's opponents.³ This implies the prestige of Ibn-Karrām and the power of his adherents at that time.

His Activity in Khurāsān

After his expulsion from Sijistān, Ibn-Karrām went to

1. Sam'ānī, f. 477.

2. Sam'ānī, f. 477; Ibn-Ḥajar, Lisān, Vol. 5, p. 355.

3. Tabaqāt, Vol. 2, p. 305.

Khurāsān, hoping to find a better environment for the propagation of his teachings, and to carry on his ascetic way of life. He travelled through Ghorchistān, Ghūr and the rural areas of Khurāsān; and went to Shāmīn, Ifshīn and Herāt. He used to dress himself in a sheep-skin, tanned but not sewn, and to wear a white cap qalansuwa. Wherever he went with his disciples, a sort of travelling platform made of brick was built for him; from it Ibn-Karrām preached and recounted Traditions.¹

Ibn-Karrām's powerful and warm preaching and simple appearance appealed to many people of these areas, especially the Lower classes. Al-Baghdādī described Ibn-Karrām's followers as feeble minded, most of them were of the weavers, distressed peasants and riff-raff of Khurāsān.²

The continuous increase of Ibn-Karrām's adherents and influence, brought upon his head and his followers, the wrath of the ulema and the governor of Khurāsān. The Traditionists led by the faqīh and muhaddith Abu Sa'īd ad-Dārimī (d. 280), strongly opposed Ibn-Karrām and got him expelled from Herat.³ On his arrival in Nīshāpūr, Ibn-Khuzayma and other ulema joined their efforts to drive Ibn-Karrām out of the town.⁴ Thus wherever he went, Ibn-Karrām

1. Wāfī, Vol. 4, p. 375; Ṭabaqāt, Vol. 2, p. 54.

2. Farq., pp. 215-16.

3. His full name was 'Uthmān Ibn-Sa'īd Ibn-Khālīd Ibn-Sa'id as-Sājīstānī, the author of the book on the reputation of the Jahmites (ar-Rad'ala-l-Jahmīyyā). See Ṭabaqāt, Vol. 2, p. 35.

4. Ibn-Hajar, lisān, Vol. 5, p. 356. Ibn-Khuzayma al-Husayn Ibn-al-Fadl al-Bajalī who condemned the Karrāmites and considered them as unbelievers. Lisān, op.cit., p. 356.

was welcomed by the lower classes, and met by the opposition and the contempt of the ulema and the Traditionists.

The popular attraction, and the appeal of Ibn-Karrām's teachings to the common people, frightened the governor of Khurāsān 'Abd-Allāh Ibn-Ṭāhir (230/844 - 248/862), and aroused his suspicions about Ibn-Karrām and his followers. Therefore in order to nip the movement in the bud, and diffuse any potential danger; he put the leader in jail, where Ibn-Karrām spent some time in custody. A few years later he was released and soon left Khurāsān to the Syrian frontier borders (thughūr)¹ where he remained until the death of the governor in 248/862.

After the death of Ibn-Ṭāhir, his son Muḥammad Ibn-'Abd-Allāh Ibn-Ṭāhir (248/862 - 259/872) succeeded him. At that time Ibn-Karrām returned to Nīshāpūr, and he probably thought that the change of Governor might have brought about a change of policy as well. But the new governor pursued the same policy of his predecessor in suppressing any suspected movement. When Ibn-Karrām started his activity, and gathered around him a considerable number of adherents, Ibn-Ṭāhir met him by the same treatment which Ibn-Karrām had before. This time it is said that Ibn-Karrām, with some of his followers, were imprisoned for eight years (243-251).² But this figure seems historically incredible since Muḥammad Ibn-Ṭāhir came to power in 248, and according to the biographers, Ibn-Karrām was released in 251, so it is more likely that this period of eight years represents

1. 'Ulamī, Uns al-Jalīl, Vol. 1, p. 262.

2. Massignon, Essai, p. 261.

the whole time which Ibn-Karrām had spent in the Ṭāhirids' prison.¹

After nearly four years of imprisonment, Ibn-Karrām was set free in Shawwāl 251/Nov. 865. It is said that the governor Muḥammad Ibn-Ṭāhir summoned Ibn-Karrām, and asked him to explain the origin of his doctrines and ideas. To this Ibn-Karrām replied, that his knowledge was a private inspiration (ilhām) from God. At this, Ibn-Karrām, according to his opponents, was ridiculed, jeered at for his fault in pronouncing ilhām as ilhām, and eventually driven away from the assembly.²

His activity in Jerusalem

Whether Ibn-Karrām saw no promising future for his activity in Khurāsān, or he was ordered to leave the region, he nevertheless left Nishāpūr and went to Jerusalem.

In Jerusalem he started his activity of preaching and propagating his views in the town and its neighbourhood. He used to preach in public near the column adjoining the cradle of Jesus. And according to his biographers, a large crowd of people were attracted by his preachings. They soon, however, discovered that Ibn-Karrām taught that faith is only qawl, that is pronouncing the Shahāda - accordingly the people turned away and burned the notes which they had written from him.³ This does not seem to be true if we consider that at the time of Ibn-Karrām's death (265), his

1. Wafī, 4, p. 375; Ibn-Ḥajar, 5, p. 354.

2. Wafī, 4, p. 375.

3. 'Ulamī, Uns al-Jalīl, Vol. 1, p. 262; Ibn-Ḥajar, lisān, Vol. 5, p. 356.

followers in Jerusalem were more than 20,000 in number.¹

In Jerusalem Ibn-Karrām did not find peace and free hand in preaching he was looking for; and soon hostility against him and his teachings emerged. Eventually, Yūnus, the governor of Jerusalem and Ramallāh expelled Ibn-Karrām from the town to the village of Zugar^h, where it is believed he spent the rest of his life.²

His death

According to some of his biographers, Ibn-Karrām died in ṣafar 255/Jan. 869,³ while others believed that his death occurred in 256/Jan. 870.⁴ They differed also whether the place of his death was Jerusalem⁵ or the village of Zugar^h⁶ - where he was expelled. Both groups agreed that Ibn-Karrām was buried in Jerusalem at the gate of Jericho near the tombs of the prophets.

Ibn-Karrām's Achievement and Significance

Ibn-Karrām was and is still a controversial figure. In the past some hold him in high rank and admired his asceticism and way of life,⁷ while to others, he was a mere ignorant man and a pretender.⁸ This conflicting view persisted up to the present.

1. Wāfī, Vol. 4, p. 375.

2. Ibn-Ḥajar, lisān, Vol. 5, p. 356.

3. Sam'ānī, f. 477, 'Uns al-Jalīl, 1, p. 262.

4. Wāfī, 4, p. 375.

5. Sam'ānī, f. 477; Az-Zabīdī, Tāj-al-'Arūs, Vol. 9, p. 43.

6. Wāfī, Vol. 4, p. 375; Ibn-Ḥajar, lisān, Vol. 5, p. 356.

7. Ṭabaqāt, Vol. 2, p. 304.

8. Ash-Shahrastānī, Milāl, p. 20. al-Isfarā'īnī, Tabṣīr, p. 65.

And while he was seen by some as one of the great thinkers of Muhammadan scholasticism;¹ others considered him as one of those wooden-minded literalists.² Therefore to do justice to him, I will try through Ibn-Karrām's works, fields of interest and personal conduct, to estimate what he really contributed to Muslim thought, and to what extent the scholars were fair or justified in their estimation of him.

His Works

We have already mentioned that Ibn-Karrām's learning was composed mainly of Traditions, commentary on the Qur'ān, other Islamic sciences and possibly some aspects of philosophy. It has been said that Ibn-Karrām compiled many works. Some of them survived until the 5th century A.H.³ It is regrettable, however, that none of his books have reached us. It is possible that the frequent engagement of the Karrāmiyya in clashes with other sects, and their persecution which ended sometimes in the destruction of their schools, had contributed to the extinction of Ibn-Karrām's works.

Some of Ibn-Karrām's views and ideas, however, survived in extracts from his books mentioned by the heresiographers and the theologians, who were often in opposition to the sect doctrines. They exposed Ibn-Karrām's view in the course of their polemic with the sect's members or during their biased exploration of the sect's

1. Massignon, Essai, p. 364.

2. Macdonald, Development....p. 172.

3. Ar-Rāzī, I'tiqādāt,...p. 67.

beliefs. Thus their statements were often liable to be distortion and misrepresentation.

At the time of the Ash'arite theologian al-Baghdādī (429-1037), one of Ibn-Karrām's works called "The Torture of the Grave" 'Adhāb al-Qabr was well known. In his Farq, al-Baghdādī gave extracts from the book, which shows Ibn-Karrām's views on many and various theological problems.¹ 'Adhāb al-Qabr, is believed to be Ibn-Karrām's basic work, that contains the principles of the sect's doctrines. Al-Isfarā'īnī in his criticism of the Karrāmiyya admitted the importance of the book among the sect's followers, and the reverence they showed to it. However to repudiate Ibn-Karrām, al-Isfarā'īnī said that the book in its present form was not the original copy that had been written by Ibn-Karrām. This copy was compiled by some learned scholars who joined the sect and came to realize the absurdity of Ibn-Karrām's views. They attempted to keep the merit of the master by compiling a new book under the same title, and destroyed the original copy.²

The weakness of al-Isfarā'īnī's assertion is shown by the fact that an even more hostile opponent like al-Baghdādī does not make such an assumption, and this proves its absurdity.

According to Massignon, the Shāfi'ite Qādī Abū-Ja'far Muḥammad Ibn-Muḥammad Ibn-Ishāq, had made a collection of some of Ibn-Karrām's views in a book called Faḍā'ih Ibn-Karrām, and Ibn-ad-Dā'ī gave two

1. Farq, pp. 216, 219, 220.

2. Tabṣīr, p. 68.

extracts from one of Ibn-Karrām's works called Kitāb as-Sir.¹

That is all we know about Ibn-Karrām's works though they are believed to be numerous. The titles of only two were preserved. Ibn-Karrām's opponents tried even to deny the authenticity of these works and doubted Ibn-Karrām's authorship. Aṣ-Ṣafadī for instance stated that most of the books of Ibn-Karrām were compiled for him by someone called Ma'mūn Ibn-Aḥmad as-Sullamī.² As far as our knowledge is concerned we cannot value positive statements regarding the rejection or the acceptance of such an assertion. Aṣ-Ṣafadī's assumption, however, is not in a better position than that of al-Isfā'īnī, mentioned before, and the same reason ~~as~~ given for the rejection of the latter might be put forward to demonstrate the weakness of the former. Ar-Rāzī acknowledged that Ibn-Karrām had compiled many books, nevertheless he described them as being ill-expressed and very poor in style.³

From the surviving extracts from Ibn-Karrām's works mentioned by his opponents, it is clear that he occupied himself with theological problems and tried to give answers to the questions raised in this field. Thus he was rightly described as a theologian (mutakallim).⁴ But this was not the only field in which he interested himself. His biographers and heresiographers ascribed to him

1. Essai, p. 263.

2. Wāfī, Vol. 4. p. 376; According to adh-Dhahabī, Ma'mūn was a liar and fabricator of Tradition. The example of which is that "faith is only qawl and actions (a'māl) are its expression".
Mizān, Vol. 3, pp. 429-30.

3. Ar-Rāzī, I'tiqādāt, p. 67.

4. Liṣān, Vol. 5, p. 353.

particular views on fiqh. Al-Maqdisī in his classification of the Muslim sects put Ibn-Karrām's sect with those who had dealt with both fiqh and kalām, such as the Shī'ites, Khārijites and Bāṭinites.¹ Moreover, Ibn-Karrām's devotion to ascetism and his interest in mystical life, led him to set an example and to formulate teachings which were followed by many ascetics. The title of his book kitāb-as-Sir suggests the esoteric and mystical nature of the work.

Theology

At the time of Ibn-Karrām, the Mu'tazilite school had already established itself, raised many questions, and pursued to some extent, free enquiry in the field of theology. From within the other sunnites' group, which up to that time were strongly holding the doctrine of bi-la kayf, appeared a tendency for supporting the dogma by using scholastic argument and dialogue. That is apart from the anthropomorphic trend, represented in the circle of the extremist Shī'ites and some Traditionists.

It seems that Ibn-Karrām and his followers came into contact with these groups, or at least tackled the problems which interested them all. According to Massignon,² "the Karrāmiyya brought to all these questions raised by the Mu'tazilite's inquiry, productive suggestions and a new analytic precision; not only based on sustained consideration but controlled by mystic experiment and enlightened and enlarged concept of words." Ibn-Karrām's views on theology will

1. Aḥsan at-Taḳāsīm, Vol. 1, p. 73.

2. Essai, p. 264.

be dealt with and discussed in detail in the following chapters. It is appropriate, however, to give at the moment general outlines of the problems he tackled and the questions he discussed.

The main problem which seems to have occupied Ibn-Karrām's thought, was that of God's essence, his attributes, and the relation between Him and the human beings and the natural phenomena. In his book The Torture of the Grave Ibn-Karrām devoted a chapter to deal with this problem, and entitled it "A Chapter on the Qualitiness (Kayfawiyya) of God".¹ He also dealt with the problem of faith and formed unprecedented views, and in his above-mentioned book he allotted a section dealing with this problem entitled "The Refutation of Traditionists on Faith".²

Ibn-Karrām also tackled the problem of Prophecy, its nature and the sinlessness of the Prophet, and used such terms as rasūl and mursal to convey his views.

Moreover Ibn-Karrām introduced new terms in the field of theology to express his ideas, such as khāliqiyya, rāziqiyya, hythawiyya and kayfawiyya.³ He attempted to give his own definition to some terms such as Jabr, īrjā' and shakk, which were the the topic of his period. He defined Jabr "determinism" as the intervention of God's grace at the beginning of the Act, and shakk as to make istithnā' with regard to one's own faith, while īrjā' meant to him, not taking into account the external accomplishment of the acts (nafy farq al-a'māl).⁴

1. Farq, p. 219.

2. Ibid., p. 220.

3. Farq, p. 219; Tabṣīr, pp. 67-8.

4. Aḥsan at-Taqāsīm, Vol. 1. pp. 37-8.

Fiqh

No work of Ibn-Karrām in the field of fiqh has been mentioned. Al-Maqdisī who considered the Karrāmiyya as Juristical-Theological-sect mentioned only four points, on which he thought the majority of Muslims disagreed with the Karrāmites. The here-siographers such as al-Baghdādī and al-Isfarā'īnī recorded some juristical points and ascribed them to Ibn-Karrām. Close examination of these points might explain the bases on which Ibn-Karrām formed his views, and showed to what extent he had contributed in this field.

One of the points ascribed to Ibn-Karrām and his followers in the field of fiqh was their dispensation with the declaration of the niyya "intention" before obligatory duties (farā'id) such as prayer, fasting and pilgrimage.¹ Niyya, the Karrāmiyya said, is only needed for the supregatory deeds (nawāfil). On this point the Karrāmites' views were based on their doctrine of faith. They believed that the man is a believer from the first creation (adh-dhar al-awwal). Since that time he has taken the responsibility for doing the obligatory duties, but he did not promise to do the supregatory ones, therefore the performer of the latter needs niyya where the former does not.² If Ibn-Karrām meant by this that there is no need for verbal pronounciation of niyya, his view would not be strange, but would be in agreement with almost all schools.³ But it seems that Ibn-Karrām meant even the denial of niyya altogether which his linking between his view on this point

1. Ibid., p. 40; Farq, p. 224.

2. Farq, p. 224. Tabṣīr, p. 69.

3. Ibn-Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Zād al-Ma'ād, Vol. 1, p. 51.

and his view regarding the faith might suggest. The point on the whole shows to what extent was the relation between fiqh and theology in the Karrāmite views.

The Karrāmiyya were accused of maintaining that obligatory prayer might be done on the horse back and be correct, and that a man shall be held to have duly performed his prayer even if the sun should have risen in the meantime, and that if a person, through ignorance of time, takes food after dawn (fajr) he may still continue his fast, and there will be no need to fast a day instead (qadā').¹ These points are not exclusively Karrāmite's. Some schools of fiqh uphold the same views, supported by Traditions and Practice.² Ibn-Karrām's unprecedented views on fiqh, however, are his statement that it is sufficient for the travellers to say Allah-Akbar twice; his declaration that it is proper to offer prayer in dirty clothes and on dirty ground and with a dirty body, yet he required ablutions for aḥdāth and not for anjās. He believed that the washing of the dead and prayer for them are customary not ordained by the law: what is obligatory consists merely in shrouding and burying them.³ He maintained that ijtihād is permissible in both fields of theology (uṣūl) and fiqh, and the mujtahid is correct except the zindīq.⁴

That is all we know about Ibn-Karrām's views concerning fiqh, and from them it does not seem that he contributed much in this field, thus his being neglected by the fugahā' can be understood. Ibn-

1. Aḥsan at-Taḳāṣīm, Vol. 1, p. 40.

2. Ibn-Qudāma, al-Mughnī, Vols. 2, p. 103; 3, p. 136.

3. Farq, pp. 223-24.

4. Aḥsan at-Taḳāṣīm, Vol. 1, p. 39.

Karrām and his followers, however, were associated with the Ḥanafite school as far as the fiqh's problems were concerned. It has already been mentioned that one of Ibn-Karrām's masters, namely al-Makiyānī, was a Ḥanafite Jurist. Al-Maqdisī described the Karrāmites as being ascetic and godly folk, and they derived ultimately from Abū-Ḥanīfa. Ibn-Taymiyya^{also} referred to them as being Ḥanafite.

Mysticism

Mysticism to Ibn-Karrām and his followers was nothing but a way of life. As has already been mentioned, Ibn-Karrām himself showed a tendency to piety, and set an example of ascetic life. He devoted his whole life to preaching and encouraging people to be virtuous and honest. That distinguished character of Ibn-Karrām has been acknowledged by many writers of the sect. Ibn-Ḥajar, for example, in spite of his criticism of Ibn-Karrām for the forged Traditions, described him as a devoted theologian and ascetic Murji'ite.¹ As-Subkī saw Ibn-Karrām as a respected personality as far as asceticism, piety, devotion, and abstinence are concerned. Both Ibn-Khuzayma and Abū-Sa'īd 'Abd-ar-Raḥmān ibn-'l-Ḥusayn al-Ḥākim, who were the leaders of the Shāfi'ite and Ḥanafite school, respectively, highly praised and admired Ibn-Karrām for his piety and devotion.² Even the mutual opponents of Ibn-Karrām could not deny outright his characteristic ascetic, and to repudiate him, they only said that he was a pretender and hypocrite.

Ibn-Karrām's personal conduct and mystical teachings had

1. Lisān, Vol. v, p. 353.

2. Ṭabaqāt, Vol. ii, p. 53.

great influence on his adherents. Some of his followers were noted as mystics, and one can mention such figures as the mystic Yahyā Ibn-Mu'ādh ar-Rāzī (d. 258/871), Makhūl, Ishāq Ibn-Mā^hshādh, his son Abū-Bakr Muḥammad as well as Ibn-al-Qudwa, some of whom shall be referred to later. Some similarities between the Karrāmites' mystical doctrines and ^{those} ~~that~~ of 'Umar as-Suhrawardī (d. 631) made Massignon to say that the Suhrawardiyya order is of Karrāmite origin.¹

Since we are not concerned with the mystical aspect of the sect I will leave the details for the expert in this field. But, as Watt stated, "a fuller examination of the historical materials in connection with the mystical works might lead to a deeper understanding",² and show us to what extent the Karrāmiyya contributed to mysticism.

The Charge against Ibn-Karrām of using Forged Tradition

We have already mentioned that Ibn-Karrām's masters and the authority on which he depended in transmitting Traditions was severely criticised. He himself was accused of complicity in forging traditions. Even the Karrāmiyya as a sect was included by the critics of Ḥadīth among those who fabricated Traditions and showed permissive attitudes towards those forged ḥadīth destined for targhīb and tarhīb.³

To clear this point we can say that the Karrāmiyya were not

1. Essai, p. 272.

2. Watt, Islamic Philosophy and Theology, p. 79.

3. Ibn-Kathīr, al-Bā'ith al-Ḥadīth, pp. 78-9. Ibn-Ḥajar, Nukhbat al-Fikar...p. 32.



alone who adopted this attitude. They were a part of a group of mystics and preachers who indulged in narrating such false Traditions. Some critics of Traditions discriminated between those traditions destined for targhīb and tarhīb and those which were concerned with law and rules.

It is reported that Aḥmad Ibn-Ḥanbal says "When we transmit from Allāh's apostle about what is Lawful and what is Prohibited, about what usage and legal ordinances, we are strict, but when we transmit from the prophet about virtuous actions and what does not lay down or rescind a legal ordinance we are accommodating about the isnād."¹ This does not mean that Ibn-Ḥanbal encouraged or accepted forged Traditions, but simply shows, his differentiation between those two kinds of Traditions.

Those mystics and other similar groups of preachers and pious people, who encouraged and accepted the fabrication of Traditions, were not motivated by vicious aims. On the contrary they were seeking reward, and thought that, by this deed they had rendered Islam a great service. When one of them² was blamed for forging Traditions concerning the virtues of the Qur'ān, he replied that "I saw people had turned away from the Qur'ān and occupied themselves with the fiqh of Abū Ḥanīfa and the maqāzī of Ibn-Ishāq, so I forged these Traditions to recall them back to the Qur'ān, and seeking the reward in the next world."³ Others, replied that he invented

1. Al-Ḥākim, al-Madkhal, p. 7. Robinson's Trans. p. 11.

2. Nūḥ Ibn-Abū-Maryam; see al-Ba'ith al-Hathīth, p. 79.

3. This was attributed to the ascetic Ghulām al-Khalīl; see al-Madkhal, p. 29.

Traditions in order to make the hearts of the people tender and soft (wad^u'tuha li-uragiga bihā gulūb al-'āma).

Such were the motives behind this trend; since Ibn-Karrām was educated and lived on the same pattern, he might have seen no harm in using forged Traditions in the course of his preaching, and works; to make his subject persuasive, effective, and more interesting, and to give justification for his views and doctrines.

From what has been said, it becomes clear that Ibn-Karrām was not an insignificant man; he was neither ignorant nor a pretender as his opponents described him. It is neither his extant views, nor his personal conduct ^{Can} ~~which~~ give support to such a verdict; and one can hardly agree with the suggestion that "Ibn-Karrām has lost himself in theological subtleties which seem to have failed to understand".¹ It is sufficient to show the importance of Ibn-Karrām ^{by pointing out} ~~and to~~ the attention given to his views and doctrines by scholars of different schools,² particularly the Ash'arites such as imām al-Haramayn al-Juwaynī, al-Ghazālī, al-Baghdādī, al-Isfarā'īnī, ash-Shahrastānī, ar-Rāzī and al-Ī'jī. It should also be remembered that Ibn-Karrām was able to found a school of thought which gained numerous adherents, and lasted for three centuries after his death.

1. Macdonald, Development p. 171.

2. It is said that a Hanafite called Muḥammad Ibn-al-Yamān as-Samarqandī, perhaps connected with al-Māturīdī, wrote a refutation of the Karrāmites Al-Jawāhir al-Muḍī'a, Vol. ii, p. 144.

The History of the Sect after Ibn-Karrām

It has already been mentioned that Ibn-Karrām's activity covered a wide area extending from Sijistān and including Shāfīn, Ifshīn, Ghurja, Ghūr and the rural districts of Khurāsān; as well as Herāt, Jerusalem and its neighbourhood. By the time of his death (255-6) Ibn-Karrām left behind him a considerable number of followers in these regions. After that his adherents and the school he founded did not vanish or disperse, but remained and lasted as an active body for nearly three centuries, and occupied a proper and continuous place in the history of Muslim thought.

In Jerusalem

After his death, Ibn-Karrām's disciples used to pay regular visits to their master's tomb in Jerusalem. Around the tomb they built a khānqa which they used as a place for worship as well as a centre for teaching, preaching and learning. Al-Maqdīsī had noticed the difference between the well arranged and systematic methods of the Karrāmite's preachings, and the typically story-telling type of the other preachers.¹

This khānqa with its systematic method of teaching led some scholars to regard it as being the first institution for learning established in the Muslim world.² With the increase of the sect's members, many khāngas were built throughout the town, and in the 4th Century al-Maqdisī referred to the Karrāmites as being numerous

1. Aḥsan at-Taqāsīm, p. 182.

2. Massignon, Essai, p. 262.

in number and possessing many khānqas and ribāṭs in Jerusalem.¹

And up to the time of Ibn-‘Asākir (d. 571) a Karrāmite community was in existence in Jerusalem.² However no prominent scholars of them was mentioned.

The Karrāmiyya in Khurāsān

Khurāsān which was the base of Ibn-Karrām's activity, continued as an important centre for the sect, throughout the coming three centuries. In the 4th Century, the Karrāmiyya were a strong party in Herāt and Ghurjīstān, and possessed several khānqas in places such as: ~~Farghānā~~, ~~Khuttal~~, ~~Gurjān~~, ~~Marwiz~~ and Samarqand as well as Gurgan, Biyar and the mountain of Ṭabristān.³

The Sect's Activity

In these regions the Karrāmiyya were very active in propagating their teachings and defending their doctrines against the attack of other sects. This led to their engagement in clashes with these sects.

Al-Maqdīsī referred to the continuous struggle in Nīshāpūr between the Shī‘ite on one side and the Karrāmiyya on the other caused by religious sectarian prejudice. In Herāt the main sectarian prejudice (‘aṣabiyya) was between the Karrāmiyya and the ‘Amaliyya,⁴

1. Aḥsan at-Taḳāṣīm, p. 179.

2. Ibn-Ḥajar, lisān, Vol. 5, p. 354.

3. Aḥsan at-Taḳāṣīm, pp. 323, 360.

4. There is no definition of the ‘Amaliyya group; however Bosworth suggested that they might have received their name from their opposition to the Karrāmiyya assertion that faith was summed up entirely in utterance of the shahāda. M.W. Vol. L. (1960), p. 8.

while in Gūrgān there were fierce struggles and strong 'asabiyya between the Karrāmiyya and the Ḥusayniyya.¹ Mutual hatred, frequent riots and disputation were the common features of the relation between the Karrāmiyya and the Mu'tazilites in the East.² And as late as 489 A.H., Ibn-al-Athīr recorded a riot in Nīshāpūr, between the Karrāmiyya on the one side led by the son of Mā^hshādh^a, and the Shāfi'ites and the Ḥanafites on the other, led respectively by Abū-l-Qāsim son of Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī, and the Qādī Muḥammad Ibn-Aḥmad Ibn-Sa'īd. In atrocious struggle the Shāfi'ites and the Ḥanafites won over the Karrāmites and many of the latter were massacred, and their madrasas were razed.³

The Scholars of the Sect

The mutual fighting between the Karrāmiyya and other sects did not prevent the appearance of prominent Karrāmite scholars, who pursued intellectual debates and disputations with the scholars of other sects.

Al-Baghdādī recorded a disputation between him and a Karrāmite scholar called Ibrāhīm Ibn-Muhājir, which occurred in 370, in the presence of Nāṣir ad-Dawla Abū-'l-Ḥasan Muḥammad Ibn-Simgūr.⁴ The Karrāmite scholar was defeated in the debate and al-Baghdādī refuted some of his abysmal errors.⁵

1. Aḥsan-at-Taqāsīm, p. 371.

2. Maqrīṣī, Khuṭaṭ, Vol. 2, p. 357.

3. I.A. Vol. 10, p. 171.

4. General of the Sāmānid army.

5. Farq, p. 224. Trans. 29-30. Cf. Bosworth, M.W. vol. 4 (1960) pp. 7-8

Another Karrāmite scholar and leader of the sect at this time was 'Abd-ar-Rahmān Ibn-Muhammad al-Nīshāpūrī, who lived for eighty years and died in 360.¹

Māmshādh family in Khurāsān produced two Karrāmite scholars Ishāq māmshādh, and his son Abū-Bakr-Muhammad. Ishāq was a pious ascetic and learned man. He studied fiqh with Shāfi'ite and Hanafite scholars, and was well versed on the subject. He showed no concern for worldly affairs, and dedicated himself for preaching and propagation of Islam, and thus he succeeded in converting more than 5,000 Magians, Jews and Christians to Islam.² He was the leader of the sect in Nīshāpūr, and the Karrāmite sub-sect al-Ishāqiya is believed to be named after him.³ As Traditionist, however, Ishāq was criticized for forging hadīth, concerning the appearance of Ibn-Karrām, and he was blamed for compiling a book on the virtues of the master.⁴ By his death on the (25th Rajab, 383/14th Oct. 993) Ishāq was succeeded by his son Abū-Bakr Muhammad in the leadership of the Sect. Similar to his father Abū-Bakr Muhammad was a man of piety and asceticism with great learning and scholarship. An anonymously written manuscript in the British Museum (MS. Or. 8049) contains a collection of moral and philosophico-mystic traditions, was claimed to be written by Abū-Bakr.⁵ He died in 410.

1. Adh-dhahabī, al-Mushtabah, Vol. 2, p. 546.

2. Sam'ānī, f. 477.

3. Ar-Rāzī, 'Itiqādāt... p. 67.

4. Mīzān, Vol. 1. p. 200.

5. Massignon, Essai, p. 267.

In the fifth century appeared the Karrāmite scholar and theologian Muḥammad Ibn-ʿl-Hayṣam.¹ He was praised by Ash-shahrastānī for his successful attempt to bring the absurd views of Ibn-Karrām to an acceptable measure.² Ibn-Abi-ʿl-Ḥadīd acknowledged Ibn-l-Hayṣam's erudition and intellectual gift, and gave an extract from one of his books called al-Maqālāt.³ Ar-Rāzī referred to a disputation between Ibn-ʿl-Hayṣam, and the Ashʿarite theologian Ibn-Furak, and gave a summary of it.⁴ The Karrāmite sub-sect Hayṣamiya, is believed to be named after him,⁵ though al-Bazdawī described the Hayṣamiya as holding together Karrāmites and Qadarites views.⁶

The Karrāmiyya and the Ghaznavids

Through māṣhād^h family, the Karrāmiyya came into contact with the Ghaznavid rulers. The piety, sincerity and asceticism of Iṣḥāq Mām^hshād^h and his son Abū-Bakr, impressed the Ghaznavid's ruler Sebūktigīn who showed his favoritism to the Karrāmiyya and was eventually converted to the sect's doctrines. When Maḥmūd of Ghazna came to power, he kept up this warm relation between the Court and the sect. Moreover he entrusted to Abū-Bakr Muḥammad a political power by appointing him waṣī^{waṣī} of Nīshāpūr. Abū-Bakr

1. Some time referred to as Ibn-Hayṣam, Bazdawī, pp. 1,12,53; and Ibn al-Hayḍam, al-Jawāhir al-Muḍīyah, Vol. 1. p. 357.

2. Milal, p. 83.

3. Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāgha, Vol. 1, pp. 659, 661-2; 664-5.

4. Asās at-Taqdīs, pp. 61-4.

5. Ar-Rāzī, Iʿtiqādāt, p. 67. Shahrastānī, Milal, p. 145.

6. Bazdawī, Uṣul ad-Dīn, p. 76.

Muḥammad and his Karrāmite followers used this political power to liquidate their enemies; and pursued a hard policy against the other sects in Khurāsān. A task which fully coincided with Maḥmūd's aim to get rid of heretical movements in his domains.¹

As a result of this policy, the heretical Bāṭiniṭes were persecuted, and their new built mosque was pulled down by the Karrāmites. When the Ismā'īlī Dā'ī al-Tāhertī came in a mission from the Fatimid caliph al-Hakam to the Sultan Maḥmūd, Abū-Bakr Muḥammad suspected the Dā'ī of holding heretical beliefs. The sultan entrusted the interrogation of al-Tāhertī to Abū-Bakr Muḥammad, who exposed ~~the~~ Shi'ite heretical views, and eventually executed al-Tāhertī in 406.² The Shi'ite Abū-'Abd-Allāh al-Ḥākim (d. 405), the biographer of the ulema of Nīshāpūr, fell foul of the Karrāmiyya. They smashed his pulpit (minbar) and prevented him from leaving his house to the mosque.³ The Ash'arite followers did not escape the Karrāmiyya policy, the Ash'arite theologian and scholar Ibn-Furak fell victim and was badly treated by them. It is said that Ibn-Furak was invited to teach in Nīshāpūr, where a madrasa was built for him. However, the Karrāmites accused him of holding heretical beliefs, and had him to vindicate and establish his orthodoxy before the Sultan Maḥmūd, and eventually the Karrāmites had him poisoned while he was on his way back home in 406.⁴

1. Bosworth, The Ghaznavids, pp. 187-8.

2. Sam'ānī, f. 103; cf. M.W. Vol. L (1960), p. 10-11.

3. Ṭabaqāt, Vol. 3, p. 68.

4. Ṭabaqāt, Vol. 3, pp. 52-5; Qazwīnī, Āthār... p. 297; Ibn-Khallikān, Vol. 1, p. 610.

The famous sūfī shikh Abū-Sa'īd Ibn-Abī-al-Khayr Mihānī, went through a similar experience. He was charged of holding heretical beliefs and destructive thoughts; but no harm was inflicted upon him.¹

On the pretext of fighting heretical groups the Karrāmiyya went too far in exacting their severe policy. Even innocent people came to suffer, So they complained to the Sultan. Moreover the increased influence of Abū-Bakr and his arrogant treatment of the ulema, brought him into conflict with the members of this class.

One of the prominent and respectable scholars, the Qāḍī Abū-'l-'Alā' Sa'īd Ibn-Muḥammad Ustuwā'ī (343/431) went for a pilgrimage in 402. He was received with honour by the caliph al-Qādir (d. 422) and messages from the caliph to the Sultan Maḥmūd were entrusted to him. The Qāḍī took the opportunity of his presence in the Sultan's court and exposed to Maḥmūd, the heterodox views of the Karrāmiyya. Their anthropomorphism and that they attribute to God what did not befit him.²

When Abū-Bakr Muḥammad was confronted by these charges, he denied holding such beliefs, and strongly rejected the accusations. He saved himself by that denial, but the Sultan ordered the local governors in Khurāsān to investigate all the members of the Karrāmiyya, and to purge the madrasas and minbars from those who hold such views unless they repented and renounced them.³

1. Bosworth, The Ghaznavids, pp. 189-94.

2. 'Utbī, p. 427.

3. 'Utbī, p. 427.

This humiliating situation led Abū-Bakr Muḥammad to seek revenge. He put forward the case that Qāḍī Sa'id is of Mu'tazilite leaning. The Sultan ordered an enquiry about the charge, and formed a commission of scholars, presided over by the Qāḍī of Ghazna Abu-Muḥammad Naṣīḥī, to investigate the allegation. Knowing the falsity of his accusation, Abū-Bakr withdrew his charges; and apologised by saying that these mutual accusations between him and Qāḍī Sa'id, were groundless, and were only motivated by the rivalry between them; and in fact neither he was anthropomorphist, nor Qāḍī Sa'id of Mu'tazilite leaning.¹

No further step was taken by the Sultan against the Karrāmite leader but the increased complaints of Abu-Bakr's abuse of power in Nīshāpūr, led Maḥmūd to expel him from office, and appointed instead Abū-'Alī al-Ḥasān Ibn-Muḥammad Ibn-al-'Abbās al-Mikālī, known as Ḥasanak, ^{ra'is} ~~ra'is~~ of Nīshāpūr.

Ḥasanak took severe measures against the Karrāmites, and treated them with cruelty, according to 'Utbi, surpassing that of Ziyād Ibn-Abīhi. The Sect's leaders were jailed, their properties were confiscated, and Abū-Bakr Muḥammad, after being deprived of spoilitation, was left to fade away into a life of seclusion and isolation.²

Maḥmūd's early sympathetic attitude towards the Karrāmiyya, and his later cruel treatment of them, and the similar policy he

1. 'Utbi, pp. 428-30; Bosworth, M.W., op.cit., pp. 11-12.

2. 'Utbi, pp. 430-435.

pursued towards other orthodox sects, led some scholars to see Maḥmūd as mere opportunists who have understood the link between political and religious conservatism, and felt that conservatism in religion was the best support for an autocratic state. Thus he gave his patronage to this group, but only so long as they remained the obedient tools of his policy.¹

As far as the Karrāmiyya sect is concerned this explanation of Maḥmūd policy is applicable and justified. Since Maḥmūd used the sect and gave them his patronage in order to harry the heretical movements in his empire, but when he felt that the existence of the sect as a powerful body might cause trouble, he did not only disperse them, but treated them with severity.

This severe measure taken against the Karrāmiyya did not put an end to their existence in Khurāsān. They persisted even as a collective body. At the town of Baihaq at some time just before 414/1023, a rich man descended by marriage from the Mīkāli family, which one of its members replaced Abū-Bakr had persecuted the Karrāmiyya, built four madrasas allotted them impartially to the Hanafites, Shāfi'ites, 'Alides and the Karrāmites, implicitly accepting the latter as meriting position with the other.²

Ibn-al-Jawzī (d. 561/1166) spoke of the Karrāmites at his time, as representing considerably large numbers in Sijistān and Khurāsān, where they had many Ma'bads and hold certain views of

1. Barthold, Turkistan, p. 289.

2. Ibn-Funduq, Tārīkh Nīshāpūr, See Bosworth, M.W. Vol. I (1960), p. 14.

anthropomorphism and incarnation.¹

The Karrāmiyya in the Ghūr Region

The early contact between the Karrāmites and the region of Ghūr is still a matter of speculation and conjecture. The presence of the sect's followers in the region might go back to the time of Ibn-Karrām himself, since his activity, as it has been mentioned before, extended as far as the Ghūr region. But how far was the influence and the effect of Ibn-Karrām in the region is still unknown. It is possible however that "the sprinkling of Muslims in Ghūr mentioned by the geographers of the 10th century might be the fruits of the preaching of Ibn-Karrām."²

That influence of Ibn-Karrām might have possibly been carried on through the activities of his followers. It has already been mentioned that the followers of the sect had a prominent place in the Ghaznavid empire. They were favoured by Sultan Maḥmūd of Ghazna for their zealous activity and piety, and they were to some extent exploited by the Sultan to liquidate his enemies. If it is considered in addition to this, that Maḥmūd carried out a series of campaigns in the Ghūr region, and made successful attempts to introduce the Ghūrīds to Islam; and that the Karrāmite were zealous evangelizers, it might be possible to say that Maḥmūd used the Karrāmites to achieve these aims.³

1. Wāfī, Vol. 4, p. 377.

2. C.E. Bosworth, "The early Islamic History of Ghūr", C.A.J. Vol. VI (1961), p. 129.

3. Ibid., p. 129.

Apart from these possible suggestions, it is a matter of certainty that by the time the Ghūrīd dynasty came to power the Karrāmiyya sect had already established itself in the region, and that the Karrāmite doctrines were predominant among the populace of Ghūr. The early rulers of Ghūr as well as the people were adherent and loyal to the sect's tenets. Thus al-Juzjānī spoke about the Sultan Ghiyāth ad-Dīn Muḥammad (d. 599/1202-3), and his brother and successor Mu'iz ad-Dīn (Shihāb ad-Dīn) Muḥammad (d. 602/1205-6), as that they had inherited the Karrāmite tenets which their dynasty had always held, and which had always been the majority faith of their subject.¹

The period of Ghiyāth ad-Dīn Muḥammad, however, witnessed the departure of the Ghūrīd Sultan from the Karrāmite tenets to those of the Shāfi'ite school. It is said that this change of loyalty to the sect took place in the year 595 A.H., and that the sultan henceforth became adherent to the Shāfi'ite school.² Different explanations for the cause of this change were given. One of them was that the poet of Ghiyāth ad-Dīn Court, Fakhr ad-Dīn Mubārکشāh, who was loyal to the Sultan, came to realize the absurdity of the Karrāmite doctrine, therefore to change the Sultan's loyalty towards the sect, he introduced to the Court the Shāfi'ite faqīh, ash-shaykh Abū-'l-Fataḥ Muḥammad Ibn-Maḥmūd al-Marwazī known as Wajīh ad-Dīn. This Shāfi'ite scholar succeeded in convincing

1. Tabaqāt Nāsīrī, Quoted, Bosworth, op.cit., p. 130.

2. I.A. Vol. XII, p. 72.

the sultan of the sect's errors, and exposed to him their heretical views, and eventually converted the Sultan to the Shāfi'ite rites. The Sultan then built madrasas in his domain for the Shāfi'ites and built a mosque for them in Ghazna.¹ Other explanations to this change was given by Ibn-al-Athīr, who said that "when the Sultan Ghiyāth ad-Dīn Muḥammad and his brother Shihāb ad-Dīn of Ghazna, conquered Khurāsān they were told that all the people of this land [sc. Khurāsān] condemned and despised the Karrāmiyya, and that it would be advisable for them, [i.e. the Sultan and his brother], to give up the sect's doctrine, therefore both became Shāfi'ites; Some said that Shihāb ad-Dīn was a Ḥanafite.² According to Juzjānī, when Shihāb ad-Dīn began to rule in Ghazna [sc. in 569/1173-4], he saw that all the people of Ghazna and the surrounding territories were Ḥanafites, thus he became a Ḥanafite.³ From these statements Bosworth came to the conclusion that the Ghūrīd Sultan's abandonment of the Karrāmiyya doctrine was connected with the extension of their power in Khurāsān and the region of Ghazna, and was necessitated by the social and the religious circumstances in those areas.⁴

The adherents of the Karrāmiyya sect, supported by some members of the Court did not easily accept the Sultan's abandonment of their doctrine. It is said that the Karrāmites attempted to do harm to the Shaykh Wajīh ad-Dīn who it was assumed had converted

1. I.A. Vol. XII, p. 72.

2. Ibid., Vol. XII, p. 72.

3. Ṭabaqāt Nāṣirī, Quoted, Bosworth, op.cit., p. 130.

4. Bosworth, C.A.J. Vol. VI (1961), p. 130.

the Sultan Ghiyāth ad-Dīn to the Shāfi'ite school. The Karrāmites showed their resentment more openly in the event of 595 which was mentioned in the previous chapter.¹ This event seems to have occurred shortly after the Sultan's conversion, and that the Sultan intended by his encouragement and favour of ar-Rāzī to combat the Karrāmite views on intellectual grounds. As has been said before, the Karrāmites and their supporters respond to this challenge by rioting, and the whole event shows the still considerable power and strength^{of the sect} in the Ghūr region.

But gradually the position and the prestige of the sect began to decline, and even the populace of Ghūr began to change their loyalty from the Karrāmite to the Shāfi'ite school. After the assassination of the Sultan Shihāb ad-Dīn of Ghazna (602/1205-6) 'Alā' ad-Dīn Ibn-Muḥammad Ibn-Abū-'Alī, who was the ruler of Ghūr during Shihāb ad-Dīn's Reign, entered into rivalry for the throne with Ghiyāth ad-Dīn Maḥmūd, the son of the Sultan Ghiyāth ad-Dīn Muḥammad. This 'Alā' ad-Dīn has been described as being an extremist Karrāmite, and was greatly disliked by the people of Firūzkūh who were Shāfi'ite by that time. Later on, Ghiyāth ad-Dīn Maḥmūd captured some followers of 'Alā' ad-Dīn who were Karrāmites and put them to death.²

This seems to be the last presence of the Karrāmites as an active body in the Ghūr region. A few decades later the invasion

1. See Chapter one, pp. 22-24.

2. I.A. Vol. XII, pp. 103-4.

of the mongol robbed the Karrāmites even of their separate identity. No traces of the sect followers are to be found in the sources of the period following that devastating invasion. Thus it seems that the mongol invasion put an end to the Karrāmite presence as well as to their works, and intellectual achievements. But the Karrāmite views and doctrines have been preserved mostly in the works of their opponents. To these doctrines we will now turn and try to expound them.

THE DOCTRINES OF THE KARRĀMIYYA

THE DOCTRINES OF THE KARRĀMIYYA

CHAPTER III

The Nature of God

This chapter will deal with the Karrāmite views regarding the nature of God, the concept of His essence and the problem of His attributes, as well as the implications of their views on these matters.

A. The Essence (dhāt) of God.

The Karrāmites are notorious for their corporealist views, and for holding that God is "body". According to al-Baghdādī

"Ibn-Karrām and his adherents maintained that God is a body (jism) possessing an end and limit on the lower side where He comes in contact with His throne, and that the throne is a place for Him. Ibn-Karrām described the object of His worship as a substance (jawhar), and believed that God is a unit of essence and a unit of substance (ahadiu-adh-dhāt wa-ahadiu-al-jawhar); at the same time He is a locus (mahāl) in which created entities exist"¹

These views attributed to Ibn-Karrām and his followers pose some problems to be solved, and certain questions to be answered. First it might be asked in what sense did Ibn-Karrām use the word "body" in relation to God. Did he mean the materialistic sense of the term, which his assertion of limit and end to God and that He is a locus of originated things might imply? Or did he rather mean something different which the saying of God is a substance, and the emphasis on the unity of His essence and substance might suggest.

1. Farq, pp. 216-17. Cf. Ṭabṣīr, pp. 65-66; Milal, p. 80; Mawāqif, Vol. 8, p. 399.

Connected with this question is the point whether Ibn-Karrām came to hold such a concept as a result of his literal interpretation of the Qur'ānic verses and Traditions, or whether he was influenced by some elements foreign to Islam. The abandonment by Ibn-Karrām's followers of the term substance suggests a change of views and a development in the later Karrāmites' thought, so that it might be asked to what extent that change was real and genuine.

To begin with the first point, we find ash-Shahrastānī of the opinion that Ibn-Karrām used the word body in its materialistic connotation, and thus he labelled Ibn-Karrām as corporealist (mujassim). Ash-Shahrastānī rejected the claim of some Karrāmites, that their master used the term 'body' for God in the sense that He is self-subsistent (qā'im bi-nafsihi). Because "their leader's tenets" said ash-Shahrastānī "were that God is a locus of temporal phenomena, speaking with vowels, sitting on the throne on high... Ibn-Karrām did not mean self-subsistence by his corporeality, nor God on high by "an upward direction", nor taking possession of the throne by "settling himself on it".¹ Ash-Shahrastānī acknowledged and appreciated the efforts of Ibn-Karrām's followers, namely Ibn-'l-Hayṣam, to correct their master's views; but he emphasized that Ibn-Karrām himself was an anthropomorphist and corporealist through and through, and that his thoughts are incorrigible and his beliefs cannot be supported.²

1. Iqdām, p. 122.

2. Ibid. p. 122; Milal, p. 83.

Of the same opinion, but with moderate temper and much more objectivity than ash-Shahrastānī, was ar-Rāzī. Quoting ar-Rāzī's own words, "What is known of the early Karrāmites is that they applied the term body to God, but they said we do not mean by it that God is body compounded of parts or composed of portions as the linguistical meaning of the term implies. We used it rather in the sense that God is in no need of place (ghanī 'an al-mahall); that He is self-subsistent",¹ if the early Karrāmites views were such, ar-Rāzī maintained, then the disagreement between them and the Ash'arites would be trifling, confined only to combat of words and to whether it is permissible on linguistical and theological grounds to apply the term body to God or not.² The examination of the sect's views, however, revealed to ar-Rāzī the falsity of the Karrāmites' claim. "The Karrāmiyya believe that God is in a position (hayyīz) and direction, and is pointed to by sensory perceptions; meanwhile, they hold that He is not so small and insignificant as the indivisible atom and the geometrical point. By holding such a concept the Karrāmites have to believe that God is extended in some or all directions; and they must admit that he is compound and composed."³ Ar-Rāzī came to the conclusion that the Karrāmiyya declined to use the terms compound and composed, though they in fact believed in their import. They applied the term body to God as a result of their belief that He is long, broad, deep and

1. Asās at-Taqdīs, p. 78.

2. Ibid., p. 78.

3. Asās, p. 78.

extending in all directions, it was only fear that prevented them from the publication of such ideas.¹

By this argument, ar-Rāzī did not only refute the assumption that the early Karrāmites used the term body as equivalent to self-subsistence or God being independent of locus, but he demonstrated even the inconsistency of the latter Karrāmites in holding such views.

Opposite views to those of ash-Shahrastānī and ar-Rāzī were introduced by Ibn-Abī-l-Ḥadīd who counted Ibn-Karrām and his followers among those who maintained that God is body but not similar to other bodies. Ibn-Abī-l-Ḥadīd clearly stated that Ibn-Karrām maintained that God is body in the sense that He is self-subsistent.² It is clear that Ibn-Abī-l-Ḥadīd's statement is in full agreement with what the Karrāmites believe to be their master's views. But Ibn-Abī-l-Ḥadīd's view might be suspected on the ground that he was highly impressed by and fully acquainted with the views of the Karrāmite theologian Ibn-l-Hayṣam.³ It is possible that Ibn-Abī-l-Ḥadīd took Ibn-l-Hayṣam's concepts as representing the views of the sect without making further enquiry whether the early Karrāmites held the same concepts or not.

Similar views to those of Ibn-Abī-l-Ḥadīd were maintained by al-Ījī. His testimony, however, is negative. He stated that the Karrāmite views regarding God's essence were that they applied the term body to God. But some used it in the sense that He is existent (mawjūd), and others applied it in the sense of self-

1. Asās, pp. 78-9; Tafsīr, Vol. 1, p. 65.

2. Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāgha. Vol. 1. p. 658.

3. See Chapter 11, p. 58.

subsistence (qā'im bi-nafsihi).¹ Al-Ījī's silence about referring to any particular views of Ibn-Karrām in this respect, might suggest that he considered him as holding one of these two views. Al-Ījī's statement, however, might rightly be objected to, by saying that he was depending on second hand information, or he was only familiar with the sect's views in their latest developing phase. These objections are absolutely true, but one has to remember that al-Ījī was in a better position than his predecessors, to present the sect's views fairly, since he was not directly involved in polemic against the sect's adherents. Lastly one might mention, but with caution, Ibn-Taymiyya's statement that the group of corporealists including all the Karrāmites, explained the term body in relation to God in the sense that He is existent (mawjūd) and self-subsistent (qā'im bi-nafsihi), not in the meaning of being compound.² The same objections raised against al-Ījī's statement might be raised here; also, Ibn-Taymiyya's lenient attitude towards the sect may have made his judgement more doubtful.

It becomes obvious from these statements, that the Karrāmites' assumption that their master meant self-subsistence by the term body, is hardly tenable. And there are ample evidences to support their opponents' claim that Ibn-Karrām was a real corporealist. But Ibn-Karrām's usage of the term substance and his emphasis on the unity of God's essence and subsistence, have to be explained; otherwise they might rightly be used as support for the later Karrāmite's

1. Mawāqif, Vol. 8, p. 25.

2. Minhāj as-Sunna, Vol. 1, p. 247.

assumption. A possible solution to this point might be attained by considering whether Ibn-Karrām had reached his views through literal interpretation of the Scriptures or whether he formulated his doctrines under the influence of foreign elements.

Concerning this point, however, we find that al-Baghdādī and al-Isfarā'īnī referred to a similarity between Ibn-Karrām's belief that God possesses a lower end, and the doctrine of the Dualists, who called their God "Light" and said He is limited on the side which borders darkness, but is not limited in the five other directions.¹ Both writers indicated also a Christian origin for Ibn-Karrām's usage of the term substance.² The suggestion of Christian and dualists' influences on Ibn-Karrām is doubtful especially when it comes as a charge of heresy from one's opponents. What seems more likely is ash-Shahrastānī's view that Ibn-Karrām fell into corporealism because of his extreme literal interpretation of the Scripture. "Ibn-Karrām started by ascribing attributes (sifāt) to God but he went to the extreme and thus fell into corporealism and anthropomorphism."³ This is more likely to be the natural development of Ibn-Karrām's view. By reading in Scriptures, he found the Qur'ān speaks of God's hands, face, eyes, that He seated himself on the throne, and suggests that He is above etc. He found the traditions ascribe ascending and descending to God; that the heart of the believer is between two

1. Farq, p. 216; Tabṣīr, p. 65.

2. Ibid., p. 216; p. 66.

3. Milal, p. 79.

fingers of the Merciful etc. Ibn-Karrām might have accepted these texts at their face values and have come to the conclusion that God is body. Thus one might consider him, quoting Macdonald; "as one of those wooden-minded literalists for whom a metaphor is a ridiculous lie if it cannot be taken in its external meaning."¹

But to escape the result to which the application of the term body inevitably leads, that is, that God is originated; Ibn-Karrām might have relied on foreign elements. His adoption of the term substance, and his denial of similarity between God and other bodies as well as his emphasis on the unity of God's essence and substance, probably were attempts to establish the difference between God and the originated bodies. So it is possible that Ibn-Karrām was influenced in this respect by some foreign elements, but one cannot be certain whether these elements were from Greek philosophy, christianity or Magianism. This influence, however, if it is accepted, must not be exaggerated. And one cannot ascribe to Ibn-Karrām himself those arguments introduced by the sect's followers to justify their doctrine, and in which the influence of Greek philosophy might be detected, since neither the time of Ibn-Karrām nor his education can support such a suggestion. Because of this difference between Ibn-Karrām and his followers one might be justified in treating his followers' views separately.

1. Macdonald; Development, p. 172.

The Views of Ibn-Karrām's Adherents

It has already been mentioned that Ibn-Karrām's followers rejected the application of the term substance to God. It is possible that they found it difficult to defend their master's view, or it might be an attempt by the Karrāmites to reconcile their views with those of the Ash'arites. The Karrāmites, however, continued to apply the term body to God, but the term body was not less repugnant to the Ash'arites than the term substance.¹

The Ash'arites objected to the application of the terms substance and body to God, because substance is specially used by them to designate the indivisible atom, which is in a position (hayyiz), forms part of the body, is never free from movement and rest, and is originated. It should not be applied to God.² They also objected to the usage of the term 'body' for the reason that body means what is compound of substances and accidents. It is demonstrated that God cannot be a substance, it follows that He must not be body, otherwise, He will be compound and originated.³ On these concepts of body and substance the Ash'arites built their theory of the existence of God by demonstrating the origination of the world which was composed of these originated bodies and substances, and by establishing the world's need of an originator namely God.

Regarding the Karrāmites' position, it is believed that when

1. Farq, p. 216.

2. Irshād, p. 10; Iqtisād, p. 94 ; Ḥyā', Vol. 1, pp. 94-5.

3. Ḥyā', Vol. 1, p. 95; cf. Wensinck, Muslim Creed, p. 209.

Ibn-Karrām said that God is a unit of essence and a unit of substance he used the term substance in the same sense upheld by the philosophers that is to indicate an existent or self-subsistent being.¹ His adherents' abandonment of the term altogether freed them from bothering about its explanation. But they had to justify and explain the term body which they retained, since otherwise their views would lead to God being originated. To justify their usage of the term body, the Karrāmites challenged the Ash'arites' atomic theory, by first denying the existence of the indivisible atom as conceived by the Ash'arites.² They objected to the theologians' views that all bodies are originated and not free from accidents. The Karrāmites asserted the existence of two kinds of bodies; one is eternal, enduring and free from accidents, namely, God; the other, however, is composite, originated and not free from accidents, and of this later kind are all bodies of this world.³

So God is body, but there is no similarity between Him and these originated bodies. To make their views on this point clearer, the later Karrāmites went to the extent of denying any similarity between their views and those of the anthropomorphists, by stating that what the anthropomorphists said about God's shape, form, etc., had nothing to do with the Karrāmite views that God has created

1. Mawāqif, Vol. 8, p. 27;

2. Muwāfaqat Ṣaḥīḥ al-Manqūl, Vol. 1, p. 187.

3. Minhāj as-Sunna, Vol. 1, pp. 84-85.

Adam by His own hand, that He settled on the throne, or that He comes in the hereafter for reckoning; "because", Ibn al-Hayṣam said "We [the Karrāmites] do not believe in one of these in an improper sense such as "two organs" as explanation of "two hands", or "corresponding to a place" or "the throne holding the Merciful" as explanation of istiwā' or "wandering about in places" as an explanation of "God coming". To Ibn-l-Hayṣam, "The Karrāmites applied to God only what had been applied by the Qur'ān without asking how, or inclining to anthropomorphism. Whatever has not been mentioned in the Qur'ān and Tradition we do not apply it as the corporealists and anthropomorphists do".¹

By this statement Ibn-l-Hayṣam tried to identify his sect with the Sunnite Muslims who held the doctrine of bi-lā kayf. He emphasized the sect's restriction to the Qur'ānic terms. But the Karrāmites' application of the term "body" to God refuted Ibn-l-Hayṣam's whole claim, since this term was neither applied to God by those Sunnites, nor used in the Qur'ān or Tradition in relation to God. The statement on the whole, however, indicates the later Karrāmites' efforts to reject any similarity between God and the bodies of this world. Here it might be asked why, if the Karrāmites were anxious to establish the dissimilarity between God and the World they used the term body.

An answer to this question might be found in the Karrāmites'

1. Milal, p. 84.

interpretation of the term body in relation to God. The Kārrāmites used body in the sense of an existing or self-subsistent being (mawjūd aw-qā'im bi-nifsihi).¹ From these definitions one can see the Kārrāmites' emphasis on the equation between body and existence. So it is possible that the Kārrāmites believed that the only existing things are bodies, and nothing apart from body can qualify for existence. Therefore to establish the existence of God they said He is body. Or, it might be, as al-Ghazālī stated, "the Kārrāmiyya considered God body, because they could not perceive an existing thing without its being body, and pointed to (mushār ilayhi)."² Such an assumption can be supported by referring to the Kārrāmites' own arguments, in which they strongly insist on making an analogy between what is perceived in the visible world and what is supposed to be existent in the invisible world.

The Kārrāmites' arguments and ar-Rāzī's criticism

Ar-Rāzī has preserved in detail all the arguments which the Kārrāmites used to justify and defend their views that God is body.

1. The first argument the Kārrāmites introduced was based on their making an analogy between the things existing in this visible world, and those of the invisible one. The Kārrāmites say: "We have never witnessed anything knowing, powerful and alive but a body; the assertion of anything contrary to what is observed,

1. Ibid., p. 146; Mawāqif, Vol. 6, p. 294; Vol. 8, p. 25. cf. E.I.¹ art. "Allāh", Vol. 1. p. 310.

2. al-Ghazālī, al-Maḍnūn aṣ-Ṣaghīr, on the margin of al-Insān al-Kāmil, Vol. 2, p. 93.

will neither be accepted by intellect, nor believed in the heart. Since God is knowing, powerful and alive, it necessarily follows that he must be body."¹ The weakness of this argument is obvious, because if an analogy was made between the two worlds in some aspect, it must be applied to all aspects, and in this case it will lead to results the Karrāmites themselves will not accept.²

In spite of the weakness of this argument, ar-Rāzī has spent much time and effort to refute it. He starts by putting forward the proposition that the absence of something similar to a thing does not necessitate the absence of the thing itself, or rather the existence and non-existence of a thing does not depend on the existence or non-existence of something similar to it. To prove this proposition ar-Rāzī introduced the following arguments:

- (a) "The intellect does not reject as unlikely the existence of a thing which has special characteristics, which are not shared by any other thing. Since this thesis cannot be rationally refuted, it necessarily follows that the absence of something similar to a thing does not necessitate the absence of the thing itself."
- (b) "The existence of the thing is either dependent on the existence of something similar to it or not. The former cannot be the case, because similarity means equality between similar things in all necessities. If similar things depend for their existence on each other, it follows

1. Asās, p. 43.

2. Bāqī Ḥanī, Tamhīd, p. 196.

that the thing is dependent on itself, which is fundamentally impossible. It infers that the existence of the thing does not depend on the existence of a similar thing, likewise the non-existence of the similar thing does not entail the non-existence of the thing itself."

- (c) "The essence of anything per se cannot exist in other things, otherwise the thing will be the other thing itself, which is fundamentally absurd."

From these arguments, ar-Rāzī concluded that the existence or non-existence of the thing in itself has nothing to do with the existence or non-existence of something similar to it. Therefore the Karrāmites were mistaken in their view that where anything has nothing similar in this visible world, its existence cannot be conceived.¹ The Karrāmites' argument supports the view that they used the term body because they believed that no existing thing apart from bodies can be comprehended. Ar-Rāzī's refutation of the argument indicates that he was well aware of the Karrāmite views.

2. The Karrāmites' second argument is much more abstruse, and the influence of philosophy on it can easily be detected: the Karrāmites said, that since God must know the bodily things of this world, the forms of these bodily things must be produced in His essence; and then it follows that He must be body. If these premises are proved to be true, it must be admitted that God is body.²

1. Asās, pp. 14-16.

2. Ibid., p. 43.

The Karrāmites gave the following arguments as proof for these premises:

(a) For the first premise that God must be knowing the bodies of this world the Karrāmites said that "all Muslims agree with them on this point. Besides, it can easily be proved by mentioning that God is the creator of these bodies, and the creator of everything must have knowledge of it, therefore it follows that God must have knowledge of these bodies."¹

(b) "For the second premise that the forms of bodily things are produced in God's essence, the Karrāmites said:

"The creator of bodily things must have knowledge of them before their coming into being, otherwise he would not be their creator. Every body known by God must be distinct from the other known bodies, in God's knowledge, otherwise He would not be knowing it. But if the body known was distinct, it would not be purely non-existent, because pure non-existence cannot be distinguished. It follows that this known body must be existing. But it does not exist in the external world. So it must be existing in the knowledge of God. It follows that the forms of all bodily things must be existing in God's essence."²

(c) Concerning the conclusion that He in whom the bodily forms existed must be body, the Karrāmites proof might be summarized in the following:

1. Ibid., p. 43.

2. Ibid., pp. 43-44.

"If two similar squares, which are equal in quality and necessity were supposed to be existing, God will know them as distinct entities. Their being distinct in God's knowledge, however, is not owing to their being different from one another in quality and necessity. So it must be because of an accidental cause ('aradī). The only possible cause in this case is that they are in distinct places, and this will not be so unless place is a divisible body. By proving these premises the Karrāmites came to the conclusion that God is body."¹

The Karrāmites' argument is clear evidence of the influence of philosophical concepts and views on the sect's thinkers; the concept of forms they used might be traced back to Greek sources.

Ar-Rāzī refuted the Karrāmites' argument by saying that "if we imagined forms of trees and horses, these forms will be engraved in our essences. This essence will be either this body or a pure substance. If it was body, it would be impossible for the forms to be imprinted in it, since it is fundamentally admitted that large things cannot be imprinted in smaller spaces. If the essence, however, is pure substance then it should be admitted that the form of sensory objects can be imprinted in what is not body. And this demonstrates the falsity of the Karrāmites' argument that the existence of the forms of bodily things in place, necessitates that the place should be body."²

1. Asās, p. 44.

2. Ibid., p. 45.

This refutation of the Karrāmites' argument is quite convincing. But the problem of God being body or not body was crucial to the Karrāmites. It is to them a matter of existence, or non-existence, it is either to say that God is body and exists or refute his being body and by this put his existence in danger.

But if God is body and so are the things of this world, what will be the relation between these two bodily entities? Would it be possible that such concepts of God and the world might easily lead to God being mixed with these originated bodies, or these bodies being mingled with Him? Were the Karrāmites aware of the problem to which their doctrine might lead or not? An answer to this might be found in the Karrāmite views about God being in place, boundary and direction, which will be dealt with now.

The Karrāmites' views regarding God being in place, position and direction

As it has already been mentioned, Ibn-Karrām, through his literal interpretation of the Qur'ānic verses such as "the merciful settled Himself on the throne" and those verses suggesting that God is in heaven and above, and possibly with foreign influence, came to believe that God touches his throne which is a place for Him, and that He is in the direction upwards.¹ Ibn-Karrām's adherents, however, substituted the word contiguity (mulāqāt) for the word touching (mumāssa), but they failed to show the real difference between the two terms.² Regarding the meaning of istiwā', some

1. Farq, p. 216.

2. Ibid., p. 216.

Karrāmites maintained that the throne is a place for God, and He is greater than it, others said He is no larger than His throne on the side where He touches it and no part of Him overhangs it.¹

Regarding the question whether God is finite or infinite,

"some Karrāmites said He is finite from all direction, but to others He is finite from the lower side only. Others, however, deny extremity altogether but say that God is Great ('aẓīm). These later differ as to the meaning of Greatness. Some say that His greatness means that despite His oneness God is on all parts of the throne; the throne is under Him and He is above all of it in the same way as He is above part of it. Some say that His greatness means that despite His oneness He touches on one side more than one thing, that is in such a way that He touches all the parts of the throne, for He is most high and Great."²

By affirming "direction upwards", the Karrāmites might have established God's separation from the world, but by ascribing to Him a place and that He is finite will imply his being composed and compound, as the Ash'arites affirmed. It seems that later Karrāmites found it difficult to hold and defend such views. Therefore they strongly denied that God has a place or that He is finite. They said that God does not touch or contact the throne but He is parallel to it. But if God is parallel to the throne, is the distance between them finite or infinite? Some Karrāmites hold

1. Farq., pp. 216-17.

2. Milal, pp. 80-81.

that it is finite, while Ibn-l-Hayṣam holds that the distance between God and his throne is infinite, and that God is eternally and infinitely separate from the world in the upwards direction.¹

Though the Karrāmites hold various views concerning other points they unanimously agreed and strongly emphasized that God is in the direction upwards. This might suggest that the Karrāmites were aware that their doctrine of God as body would lead to Pantheism. To avoid such a result they attempted to establish the separation of God from all bodies. Their efforts to do so might be demonstrated in the following statement ascribed to Ibn-l-Hayṣam. by Ibn-Abī-l-Ḥadīd, "God is one existing essence, separate (mubā'yn) by himself from all other existing things. He is neither inherent in things as the accidents are, nor mixed with them as the bodies. He is separate from the creatures in the direction upward."²

This statement clearly illustrates the Karrāmite anxiety to avoid any kind of contact between God and the world which might lead to Pantheism (waḥdat al-wujūd). Therefore their arguments to establish that God is in the upwards direction might be understood.

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1. By asserting an infinite distance between God and the world, and maintaining at the same time that God is in the above direction, Ibn-l-Hayṣam was in obvious self contradiction since the infinite cannot be possibly encompassed between two limits. Ibn-Abi-'l-Ḥadīd however denied the ascription of such absurd views to Ibn-l-Hayṣam. See Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāgha, Vol. 1. p. 659.
 2. Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāgha, Vol. 1, p. 659.

The Karrāmites' arguments that God is in a direction.

To support their view that God is in a direction the Karrāmites introduce the following arguments:

1. They said: "Both God and the world are existing entities. It is self-evident that in the case of two existing entities, each one of them is either penetrating the other as the accident penetrates the substance, or is separate from it in one of the six directions such as in the case of two self-subsistent entities. Since God is not an accident but self-subsistence, it necessarily follows that He does not penetrate the world, but must be separate from it in one of the six directions."¹

To demonstrate the self-evidence of this proposition, the Karrāmites said:

"This proposition is undoubtedly applicable to the existing things of the visible world, since it is noticeable that where there are two things, one of them either penetrates the other or is separate from it. The cause of that is either its being substance or accident or something shared in common between substance and accident, which is either origination or existence. They ruled out all these reasons as possible causes, except existence. Since God is existing this Proposition, the Karrāmites said, must be applied to Him, and it follows necessarily that He must be penetrating the world or separate from it in a direction. But the first is

1. Asās, p. 61; Arba'īn, pp. 106; 113; Milal, p. 80; Iqdām, p. 109; Iqtisād, p. 100.

already demonstrated to be impossible, therefore He must be separate from the world in a direction."¹

It is quite clear that this argument is founded on the Karrāmites' basic view of making an analogy between the visible and invisible worlds. From this point the argument is interesting because it supports the notion mentioned before that the Karrāmites said that God is body because they could not conceive an existent thing without it being body. Moreover the argument shows the Karrāmites' attempt to separate between God and the bodies of the world.

In his criticism of the Karrāmites' arguments, ar-Rāzī started by refuting the Karrāmites' claim that their proposition is self-evident. To him this proposition is not so certain as the proposition that one is half of two; Secondly, the philosophers maintain the existence of objects such as intelligence, celestial souls, rational souls and primordial matter, which are neither penetrating into nor separate from the world. Similarly the Mu'tazilites claim that the existence of positive and negative acts of Volition (irādāt) and (karāhāt), and annihilation (i'dām), cannot be regarded as penetrating into or separate from the world. Besides, the existence of relationships (idāfāt) between individuals (a'yān) such as fatherhood and sonship, can easily be proved, these also are neither penetrating the world nor separate from it. Unless the Karrāmites prove the absurdity of these assumptions, ar-Rāzī said,

1. Asās, p. 62; Milal, p. 80.

they cannot claim self-evidence for their proposition.¹

Furthermore, ar-Rāzī demonstrated the weakness and the invalidity of the Karrāmites' arguments regarding the cause behind this proposition. He rejected their refutation of substance and accident as being the cause; if these however are invalid, the Karrāmites have no right to restrict the cause only to origination and existence. "If existence, however, is accepted as the only cause in this respect, the Karrāmites have no justification for applying this proposition to God unless they maintain that existence is the same in the visible and invisible worlds. But this will lead either to the similarity between God and originated things in all aspects, or to the view that God's existence is something additional to his quiddity (māhiyya). The Karrāmites, however, do not accept either of these, so they should not make an analogy between the things which exist in the visible world and those of the invisible."²

"The disjunction, which the Karrāmites used, necessitates the division of things into three categories, not into two as the Karrāmites claimed. Therefore the disjunction should be that where there are two existing things, one of them must be either penetrating into the other, or separate from it in a direction, or neither penetrating nor separate. The Karrāmites cannot prove the impossibility of the third division."³

2. The Karrāmites' second argument was that the cause of the

1. Asās, pp. 62-4.

2. Ibid., pp. 67-72.

3. Ibid., p. 114.

body being specified by place and direction is due to its being self-subsistent. Since God shared with it in this respect, it follows that He must be in a direction.¹ Ar-Rāzī rejected this argument by stating that it is quite possible that the cause of the body being specified by a direction and place is due to its own essence, and not to other attributes. Because if it was due to another attribute, say self-subsistence, this attribute will need another attribute to specify it, this will go on to an endless chain, which is impossible.²

3. To prove that God is specifically in the upward direction the Karrāmites said that the people by their disposition (fiṭra), raise their hands to the upward direction when they implore God for mercy. This indicates that God is in the above direction.³ Secondly, the above direction is the noblest one, and since God is the most noble He must be in that direction.⁴

Ar-Rāzī refuted the first argument by saying that the raising of the hands upwards cannot be a sign of God being in that direction, otherwise, the people placing their foreheads on the ground must be taken as a sign of God being in the earth, which is as absurd as the first suggestion.⁵ For the second argument, ar-Rāzī said that "there is no such absolute upward direction, because the universe is a sphere, therefore every direction of it is above in relation to some parts and below in regard to others. Secondly, if God is

1. Arba 'īn, p. 113.

2. Arba 'īn, p. 114.

3. Asās, p. 76; Arba 'īn, p. 114.

4. Arba 'īn, p. 114.

5. Asās, p. 76; Arba 'īn, p. 115.

in the upward direction, his essence will be extending upwards either infinitely or finitely; if it was the former then there could be no point supposed in his essence; without another point above it: thus every part of Him would be below. If it was the latter, that is finite, then the void (khalā'), which is supposed to be above him, will be higher than God. In both cases, however, there will be no absolute highness. Thirdly, the nobility attributed to the above direction is owed to the locus and direction by their essence, while to the located (mutamakkin) that is God, by virtue of his being in them. If so, then the nobility of the place will be higher than that of God, which is absurd and impossible, and so is the Karrāmites' argument."¹

4. The Karrāmites quoted as support for their view that God is in the upward direction some Qur'ānic verses and Traditions, and believed that these were strong evidences which show that God is in the upward direction and in a place.

To this ar-Rāzī's reply was that if it is found that the traditional evidences (zawāhir naqliyya) contradict the rational proofs (barāhīn 'aqliyya), they cannot be held both as true, or discredited together as false. If the traditional evidences, however, were accepted, and the rational proofs were rejected, this would lead to the discredit of the traditional evidences themselves. Because the rational proofs are the bases of the traditional evidences, the only remaining alternative is to believe in the

1. Arba'īn, p. 115.

rational proofs, and the traditional evidences can be either metaphorically interpreted or their meanings be entrusted to God.¹ Therefore the traditional evidences which the Karrāmites have quoted cannot be taken to prove their view, since they contradict the rational proofs. Ar-Rāzī himself has chosen the method of interpretation and thus explained all the verses which suggest that God is body in a place or in a direction.²

5. The Vision of God

The Karrāmites' views concerning the Divine vision are quite consistent with their other views about the concept of God. They hold that God is body in direction and place, so they found it easy to maintain the possibility of the vision by the eyes, face to face in the hereafter. Even the Karrāmites used vision as support for their view that God is in a direction. They said since God's vision has been established, and the things seen should be actually or practically in front of the seer, it necessarily follows that God must be in a direction. The Karrāmites acknowledge that vision required certain conditions to be fulfilled, and fully admitted their realization. They maintain that if God is not body in place and direction, not only His vision will be impossible, but His very existence cannot be proved.³ As far as the conditions

1. Arba'īn, p. 115; Asās, p. 172; Ma'ālim, p. 33.

2. Asās, pp. 79-167; ar-Rāzī has devoted almost two-thirds of this book to interpret the Qur'ānic verses and tradition which suggest corporealism or anthropomorphism.

3. Mawāqif, Vol. 8, pp. 116, 142.

of the Divine vision are concerned, the Karrāmites were in full agreement with the Mu'tazilites; the latter, however, according to their own concept of God, reached a conclusion completely different from that of the Karrāmites. The Mu'tazilites believe that God is not body nor in direction nor place; and the fulfilment of these conditions will inevitably lead to such corporealist concepts, therefore they sacrificed the vision of God for the sake of His tanzīh. They hold fast to the Qur'ānic verse "The eyes never apprehend Him; though He apprehends them", and interpret the verses which imply the possibility of the Vision. They acknowledge, however, the possibility that the believers could know God by their hearts in the hereafter.¹ So it can be said that both the Karrāmites and the Mu'tazilites were consistent in their views regarding the problem of the Divine Vision.

Those for whom the Vision caused difficulty were the Ash'arites who held that God is not body or in direction, though they asserted the possibility of the Vision. Ash'ari himself asserted an unqualified vision, and rejected the Mu'tazilites' interpretation of the verses which imply the possibility of the Vision. Apart from his dependence on the scripture to support his view, al-Ash'ari introduced the following rational justification of the Vision. He held that the only condition for something to be seen is its being existent, and since God is existent then it is

1. Fīṣal, Vol. 3, p. 2; Tabṣīr, p. 37.

possible for the eyes to see Him.¹ Later Ash'arites, however, brilliantly used al-Ash'ari's rational argument that Vision presupposes only existence, but they departed from the concept of vision asserted by him. In their hands Vision turned into a kind of intellectual experience or knowledge, related to the existence of God. It presupposed no special organs and was unconnected with any of the five senses.²

Ar-Rāzī, later on, differed from all Ash'arites over the rational justification of Vision. He found their rational proofs can hardly be tenable and used even the Mu'tazilites' objections to demonstrate the weakness of the Ash'arites' proofs.³ He openly stated his rejection of the Ash'arite arguments as well as the Mu'tazilite views and declared his adoption of the Māturīdite position that vision can be justified only by scriptures and needs no rational justification.⁴ Ar-Rāzī on the other hand refuted the Karrāmīte views as well as their argument that vision necessitates the being of the things seen in front of the seer. It is true, ar-Rāzī said, that "we do not conceive a visible thing in the visible world unless it is actually or practically in front of the seer; but we do not also conceive a visible thing unless it has size, extension and being compound. If the Karrāmītes hold that there

1. Ibāna, pp. 10-19; Milal, p. 72.

2. Irshād, p. 100; Iqtisād, pp. 109-110.

3. Arba'īn, pp. 190-198.

4. Ibid., p. 198; Ash-Shahrastānī, before ar-Rāzī, took the same position and stated that vision is a matter of scriptural attestation and it is difficult to be proved by intellect. see, Iqdām, p. 369.

is a difference in the visible world and the invisible world regarding the latter conditions, they should admit the same difference between the two worlds concerning the former. Thus they should realise that the conditions of vision in this world must not be applied to the vision in the invisible world."¹

From ar-Rāzī's arguments against the Karrāmite view it seems that He had realized the inner motive which led them to hold such a concept of God. He must have realized that the Karrāmites were not able to conceive an existing thing without being a body subject to the conditions and rules of the existing things of this world. Therefore it can be understood why he spent so much time and effort to establish the existence of things which are not subject to the necessities of sensory perceptions and imagination. Ar-Rāzī gave an example of the concept of humanity which is something different from the individuals shared in it, and has nothing to do with specific shape or form, though it is conceivable regardless of place, boundary and direction. If such reality can be conceived regardless of shape and sensory condition, it cannot be impossible to conceive a God who is free from all necessities of senses and imagination.² Ar-Rāzī gave another example of quiddities such as knowledge and nature, which can be conceived by only considering their definition and realities regardless of their boundary, shape and measurement. A person, ar-Rāzī said, can even conceive himself,

1. Asās, p. 76.

2. Ibid., p. 7.

while he is in deep thought, without considering his shape, boundary etc.

From what has been said it seems that neither Ibn-Karrām nor his followers used the term "body" for God in the sense which defined and was understood by the Ash'arite theologians, i.e. material compounded of indivisible atoms and composed of portions. Nevertheless the Karrāmites emphasized that God is body in order to affirm His existence. They saw that the denial of God being body is a denial of his existence as a real being, and thus it is a threat to their central belief. The Ash'arites holding their own concept of body, saw that the application of the term body by the Karrāmites is a threat to the uniqueness and transcendence as well as to the existence of God. So the dispute between the two parties was a bitter one since each of them was defending his central belief.¹

1. Watt, Islamic Revelation in the Modern World. pp. 80-86.

B. God is Locus (mahā) of Temporal Phenomena

It is believed that the Karrāmites unanimously agreed that the originated things subsist in God's essence. Even Ibn-l-Hayṣam, who brought about many corrections in the sect's doctrine, did nothing regarding this point. The Karrāmites' views concerning this point are based and linked with their views about the attributes of God, and their theory of the origination and annihilation of the world. Therefore by giving an exposition of the sect's views regarding these two points we might understand what the Karrāmites meant by saying that God is locus of temporal phenomena and to what extent their views were rightly presented by their opponents.

The attributes of God

(1) The essential attributes

All the Muslim theologians agreed that God is powerful, willing, knowing, living, seeing and articulate. But they differed as to whether He has attributes such as power, knowledge, will etc., and whether these attributes are distinguished from and additional to His essence or not.

The Mu'tazilites¹ believed that God is living, knowing and determining per se, not by life, knowledge and power.² They maintained that God is knowing, potent and willing by virtue of His

1. The Mu'tazilites first reduced all the Divine attributes to two: knowledge and power, they reduced even these to one attribute, that is God unity.

2. Iqdām, p. 180; Trans. p. 69.

own essence and not by attributes distinct from or extraneous to His essence.¹ They thought that the affirmation of eternal attributes would necessitate plurality of eternals and thus endanger the oneness of God. The eventual result of the Mu'tazilites' views was the denial of God's attributes.

The Ash'arites, however, following the early Sunnites held that since God is potent, willing, etc. it necessarily follows that He must have attributes such as power and will. Thus they maintained that God knows by knowledge, is powerful by power and willing by will, etc. which are eternal, additional to and subsist in His essence. To avoid the Mu'tazilites' objection that such views will lead to the association of many eternals with God, the Ash'arites said that these attributes are neither the essence of God itself nor other than His essence.²

Concerning the Karrāmites' views, it is believed that they had affirmed eternal attributes to God, and said that He is knowing by knowledge, potent by power, living by life and willing by will. These attributes are eternal and subsist in God's essence.³ According to this statement ash-Shahrastānī put the sect in the same category with the Ash'arites,⁴ and Tritton considered them orthodox as far as the attributes of God are concerned.⁵ A close examination of the

1. Bazdawī, Usūl, p. 35.

2. Milal, p. 67.

3. Milal, p. 83.

4. Ibid., p. 119.

5. Muslim Theology, p. 109.

sect's views on these attributes, however, might lead to a result different from those of ash-Shahrastānī and Tritton, and shows to what extent the Karrāmites were in disagreement with the Ash'arites and the other Sunnite Muslims.

God's Power

According to ash-Shahrastānī's statement mentioned above, the Karrāmites hold the same view as the Ash'arites regarding God's power. But this does not seem to be the case for the following reasons: first, the Karrāmites conceive God's power as a faculty implying all the necessities without which an action cannot exist, such as knowledge, life and even the perfections of organs,¹ while to the Ash'arites power simply means the attribute which make the thing possible actual.² Secondly, to the Ash'arites, God's power is not limited by certain spheres of influence, but it covers all possible things,³ the Karrāmites, however, maintain that God's power extends only over the things originated in God's essence, but has no influence on the particulars of this world.⁴ Thirdly, the Ash'arites hold that God's power is one,⁵ while the Karrāmites differ as to whether it multiplies according to the multiplicity of the species of the things originated in His essence, or according to the multiplicity of the originated things of the world.⁶ From this

1. Baghdadi, Uṣūl, p. 43.

2. Iqtisād, p. 120.

3. Iqtisād, p. 120; Muḥaṣṣal, p. 129.

4. Farq, p. 220.

5. Ibid., p. 334.

6. Milal, p. 82.

it becomes clear that God's power as maintained by the Karrāmites cannot be said to be identical with that held by the Ash'arites.

Life

This attribute did not present great problems to the theologians nor to the Karrāmites. Therefore the Karrāmites affirmed this eternal attribute to God; they considered it, however, as part of God's power as has been mentioned before.¹

Knowledge

Concerning God's knowledge, the Karrāmites are believed to have said that God knows from eternity all things in the manner according to which they are going to exist in the future.² This statement suggests that they are almost in agreement with the Ash'arites who maintain that God's knowledge is eternal and related to all things knowable, regardless of their being existent or non-existent, whether they are possible or impossible.³ However, a statement mentioned by ar-Rāzī seems to contradict this assumption. According to ar-Rāzī the Karrāmites hold that "God has now knowledge of the existence of the world, because if He had such knowledge, while in reality the world did not come into existence, He would be ignorant, which is impossible for God. Therefore the Karrāmites maintain that God knew of the existence of the world when it became existent; this knowledge is originated and subsists in His essence."⁴

1. Baghdādī, Uṣūl, p. 43.

2. Milal, p. 84.

3. Iqtisād, p. 130; Milal, p. 67.

4. Muḥaṣṣal, p. 114.

By asserting an originated knowledge, the Karrāmites were in disagreement with the Ash'arites' view which said that God knows the originated things in eternity and no change occurred in His knowledge when they came into being. The Ash'arites solved the problem which seems to have troubled the Karrāmites, that is: how God knows the originated things in eternity, by stating that in the example of the world "God knew in eternity the existence of the world at the time of its existence. This knowledge is one, but it has three aspects, (1) in eternity God knows that the world will come into being later, (2) at the time of its existence, He knows that the world is in the process of coming into being, (3) and after its existence, He knows that the world has come into being. These three states come over the world successively. The world becomes known to God by virtue of that attribute which does not change. What changes is the states of the world."¹ The Karrāmites have failed to reach this solution to the problem of the relation between God's knowledge and the originated things. Therefore they maintained the existence of originated knowledge which is related to the originated things, and said that this knowledge subsists in God's essence.

Will

Since All existing things are produced by God's power and God has knowledge of them all, the Muslim theologians agreed that God has will by which He determines the possible things by existence,

1. Iqtisād, pp. 161-2.

or non-existence, and in which shape, measure, time, etc. He determines their existence. But the theologians differed as to whether God's will is eternal or originated. The Ash'arites believe that God's will is eternal, subsists in God's essence and is related to all the things possible.¹ The Mu'tazilites,² however, maintain that God's will is originated but in no place.

For the Karrāmites' views, it is believed that they affirmed an eternal will (mashī'a) which subsists in God's essence.³ Thus their view might seem similar to that of the Ash'arites. But, while the Ash'arites hold that God's will is connected with all the things possible, we find that the Karrāmites' mashī'a is only connected with the origins of the muhdathāt and the temporal phenomena which subsists in God's essence (hawādith).⁴ For the determination of the originated things of this world the Karrāmites asserted a volition (irāda) which they said is originated, subsistence in God's essence, and related only to the muhdathāt.⁵ Thus the Karrāmites distinguished between mashī'a and irāda on the ground that the former is eternal and connected with hawādith while the latter is temporal, subsists in God's essence and is related

1. Milal, p. 67.

2. Iqtisād, p. 134; Arba'īn, pp. 153-4.

3. Milal, p. 83.

4. Milal, p. 82. The Karrāmites differentiate between muhdathāt the originated thing of this world; and hawādith that is the temporal phenomena which subsists in God's essence. In order to distinguish between these two kinds of originated things.

5. Milal, p. 82.

to the muhdathāt.¹ From this it becomes obvious that the Karrāmites' mashī'a cannot be identical with the Ash'arite concept of will. On the other hand a similarity might be found between the Karrāmites' concept of irāda and the Mu'tazilites' views about God's will, with the difference that to the Mu'tazilites "will" exists in no place while to the Karrāmites' irāda subsists in God's essence.

The Karrāmite and the Mu'tazilite concept of originated will was rejected by the Ash'arites, on the ground that the originated things depend on God's will, and if this will was originated, it would need another will to determine it and this will lead to an endless chain.² Though the Karrāmites were considered in a better position than the Mu'tazilites, because the latter's assertion of originated will in no locus is nonsense,³ but the Karrāmite belief that irāda subsists in God's essence was also rejected by the Ash'arites.⁴

Hearing and Seeing

"To the majority of the Ash'arites and the Mu'tazilites, as well as to the Karrāmites "hearing" and "seeing" are eternal attributes which subsist in God's essence and in excess of His knowledge."⁵ From this statement the Karrāmites' view seems

1. Iqdām, p. 104.

2. Muḥaṣṣal, p. 133; Arba'īn, pp. 153-4.

3. Iqtisād, p. 134.

4. Arba'īn, p. 154; Iqtisād, p. 135.

5. Muḥaṣṣal, pp. 123-4; cf. Iqdām, p. 341.

to be similar to those of the Ash'arites. But opposite views to this were attributed to the sect. Ash-Shahrastānī, for instance, stated that some of the Karrāmites explained "hearing" and "seeing" as God's faculty to hear, and His faculty to see; others asserted an eternal "hearing" and "seeing", and explained God's faculty to hear and to see as the relationship between "seeing" and "hearing" and the things perceived.¹ Ash-Shahrastānī ascribed to them also, the view that God hears and sees what he had not perceived before and that hearing and seeing for Him began in time.² These statements of ash-Shahrastānī are in obvious contradiction with that mentioned by ar-Rāzī. While ar-Rāzī's statement said that the Karrāmites ascribed eternal hearing and seeing to God, that of ash-Shahrastānī suggests that they hold that hearing and seeing are originated in time. Another statement, however, mentioned by ar-Rāzī himself, might help in giving the real views of the sect on this point. According to ar-Rāzī the Karrāmites believed that God neither sees the world, nor hears sounds in eternity, because seeing or hearing things as existing while they are not is wrong and impossible for God. So when sound and the world come into being, God has hearing and sight of them.³ This statement supports the view suggested by ash-Shahrastānī that the Karrāmites affirmed an originated hearing and seeing. At the same time it is quite compatible with the sect's general views concerning the relation between God's attributes and the originated things of the world

1. Millal, p. 82.

2. Iqdām, p. 119.

3. Muḥaṣṣal, p. 114.

which have been referred to while we were discussing their views regarding God's will and knowledge.

Speech

To the Karrāmites, God's speech has two aspects: one is kalām, that is God's potency for utterance or speaking, the other is qawl, that is the utterance itself. To them the first is prior, eternal and one, while the second is originated, subsists in God's essence, does not cease or pass away, and is composed of many ideas or phenomena such as: statements about the past and future, books revealed to the prophets, threats, promises and laws.¹ As a result of this distinction between kalām and qawl, the Karrāmites differentiate between the speaker (mutakallim) and the qā'il. They maintain that God has ever been speaker and sayer, He has been speaker in eternity because of His power to utter, and in the sense that He is able to produce speech in His essence. Whenever He produces something out of His essence, He produces the word "Be" (Kun) in His essence.² God also has been eternally qā'il because of a faculty to utter (qā'iliyya) and not because of the utterance. His faculty to utter is His power to utter, but His utterance consists of words originated in His essence. Thus the utterance of God according to them is created in His essence, while God's kalām is eternal.³

1. Mīlāl, p. 81. cf. Muslim theology, p. 109.

2. Iqtisād, p. 159.

3. Farq, p. 219. One actually sees no difference between the Karrāmite concept of kalām and their view of qā'iliyya, since both of them are potential power to utter.

Both the Mu'tazilites and the Hanbalites agreed that God's speech is composed of letters and sounds. But the Mu'tazilites hold that it is created by God in something other than His essence and subsists in a temporal substrate. By the word mutakallim the Mu'tazilites understood that when God wills or unwills something He creates special sounds and letters in a body to indicate His will and unwillingness.¹ When God gives these sounds and letters existence, they are heard in the substrate, but they cease to exist afterwards.² The Hanbalites, however, maintain that these letters and sounds are eternal and subsist in God's essence.³ This definition of kalām as sounds and letters is similar to the Karrāmites' concept of qawl, but the Karrāmites did not go as far as to say that it is eternal as the Hanbalites did; or to believe that it is created in a temporal substrate and ceased to exist as the Mu'tazilites said. The Karrāmites' view is that qawl is originated in God's essence, and will never pass away.

The Ash'arites, however, defined God's speech as the speech of the mind (kalām nafsi), not that composed of sounds and letters. To them, God is speaker, not by speech composed of letters and sounds, but He is speaker by kalām nafsi which is eternal and subsists in His essence. Sounds and the letters are mere indications of His speech.⁴ The Ash'arites rejected both the Mu'tazilites'

1. Arba'īn, p. 177; Muḥaṣṣal, p. 125.

2. Iqdām, p. 288.

3. Mawāqif, Vol. 8, p. 92.

4. Iqtisād, pp. 141-43; Muḥaṣṣal, p. 125.

assumption that God's speech is created in some substrate and the Karrāmites' belief that it is originated in God's essence.¹

The Ash'arites' concept of kalām nafsi might seem similar to the Karrāmites' concept of kalām since both of them are held to be eternal. But the difference between the two concepts is that the Karrāmites' kalām is God's power to utter, while the Ash'arites maintain that kalām nafsi is report (khavar) which includes God's speech commanding, forbidding and threatening. These to the Karrāmites are originated phenomena subsisting in God's essence.

Concerning the Qur'ān, whether it is created or uncreated, the Karrāmites refrained from saying that it is created, but they maintain that it is originated and subsists in God's essence. They refrained from saying it is created, because created things, to the Karrāmites, are muhdathāt and if the Qur'ān is muhdath it would not be God's qawl since God's qawl is originated, but subsists in God's essence while the muhdathāt are not.

The Karrāmites used the same arguments of the Mu'tazilites to prove that God's speech is originated. Apart from the traditional evidences they quoted, the Karrāmites introduced the following arguments:

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1. To ar-Rāzī, the Ash'arites objections against the Mu'tazilites' views are weak and based on misunderstanding of the latter's views. The Mu'tazilites' views should be fully acceptable by the Ash'arites since they believe that all origination is subject to God's power, so it is possible that God will create sounds in animate or inanimate bodies; the real difference between the Ash'arites and Mu'tazilites is that the former affirmed kalām nafsi, while the latter did not. See Arba'īn, pp. 177-8; Muḥaṣṣal, p. 125.

1. They said "God's command, whether it is sounds and letters or ideas subsisting in God's essence, cannot be eternal, because in eternity the person ordered and prohibited was not existing and command and prohibition addressed to a non-existent is nonsense. So the Qur'ānic verse 'take off thy shoes' addressed to Moses cannot be eternal, since Moses did not exist in eternity".
2. "God tells about many events which happened in the past such as 'We send Noah to his people'. If these reports were eternal, then God will be telling about events which happened before eternity, and it follows that eternity is preceded by time, and that God lies in His speech. And both these are impossible."
3. "If God's command was eternal then it would be everlasting, because whatever it's eternity established, its non-existence would be impossible. In this case if God commanded Zaid to say the dawn prayer for instance, this command would last for ever, which is absurd and so is the notion that God's command is eternal."
4. "Naskh is unanimously agreed upon. It means either the abrogation or the termination of a rule after it is established. In both cases it entails the abolition of the rule. But everything abolished after it's being established is not eternal, because whatever its eternity established its non-existence would be impossible."¹

The Ash'arites refuted these arguments by pointing out that what is changing in these instances was not the attribute of kalām, but rather the relations of the attributes to the originated things,

1. Arba 'Īn, pp. 182-4; Muḥaṣṣal, p. 133.

and this does not necessitate the origination of the attribute. God's command, the Ash'arites believe, is eternal without the existence of the person ordered. When the person concerned comes into being, he is ordered by that command without the occurring of a change in the order itself. They gave an example of a man who was told by a prophet that a son would be born to him, but he would die before the child's birth. That man might ask another man to tell his son, when the son reaches puberty, that his father required him to occupy himself with study. In this example an order is found without the person ordered. When the son reaches puberty, he would be ordered by that order, without change in the order itself. Therefore the existence of order without the existence of the person ordered cannot be considered as absurd.¹

Regarding God's reports about events which happened in the past, the Ash'arites believed that God's reports in eternity are one, but their relationships differ according to the differences of times, therefore the wording indicates the difference of these times. In the example "We send Noah to his people", the report about Noah's mission is eternal and subsists in God's essence. It is expressed, however, before the sending of Noah by "we send him", and after he was sent by "we sent him", the wording differs according to the differences of conditions, but the meaning which subsists in God's essence does not change.²

1. Muḥaṣṣal, pp. 133-4; Iqtisād, pp. 164-5.

2. Muḥaṣṣal, p. 134; Iqtisād, p. 164.

Concerning naskh, the Ash'arites said it is only related to the sounds and letters and there is no argument about the change in these, but the eternal kalām which the letters indicate is not subject to change.¹

From the exposition of the Karrāmites' views regarding the seven attributes, it becomes clear that they hold different views from those of the Ash'arites, as they tried to solve the problem of the relation between God's attributes and His creatures, they ascertained an originated knowledge, will, hearing, seeing and speech, which subsist in God.

(2) The Active Attributes

The early Sunnite Muslim did not differentiate between these attributes pertaining to God's actions, i.e. the active attributes such as creating, sustaining, originating, producing and bringing into existence etc. and those of God's essence that is the essential attributes.² Later, however, these attributes of action were considered as one of the points on which the Ash'arites and the Māturīdites held real disagreement.³

The Māturīdites called these attributes takwīn and considered it as a real attribute, like knowledge and power, which is eternal and subsists in God's essence.⁴ The function of takwīn to the Māturīdites is different from that of power. Power, to them, is

1. Muḥaṣṣal, p. 134.

2. Iqdām, p. 181.

3. Abū-'Udhba, al-Rawḍa al-Bahiyya, pp. 39-43.

4. Taftāzānī, Sharḥ al-'Aqā'id an-Nasafiyya, p. 87.

connected with the potential existence of the created things but does not affect the created actual coming-into-being, this latter was the function of takwīn and through it the non-existence was brought to an existing state. To them takwīn is different from mukawwan, that is the thing originated, because the former is eternal and the latter is temporal and does not subsist in God's essence.

The Ash'arites, on the other hand, maintained that these attributes are temporal; they are nothing more than the relationships between God's power and the objects created, sustained, etc. Thus takwīn to them is merely a rational expression and has no effect; the actual effect is due to God's power, through which the action took place.¹

The Karrāmites ascribed takwīn to God as the Māturīdites did. But they often used the terms ihdāth and muhdath as synonyms for takwīn and mukawwan respectively. The Karrāmites differed

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1. The Ash'arites rejected the Māturīdites concept of takwīn by stating that if takwīn means the effectiveness of the power over the object it has power over, then it will be a relational attribute (sifa nisbiyya) which exists at the time the mukawwan exists, and this entails the origination of takwīn. If takwīn, however, has effect in the actual existence of the mukawwan, then it will be the power itself. In this case if its effect is voluntary as that of power, it will follow that two similars combine to produce one effect which is impossible. If takwīn's effect, however, is necessary, then God will be acting by necessity and not by choice (ikhtiyār), which is impossible. The Ash'arites also denied the eternity of takwīn on the ground that its being eternal would necessitate the eternity of the mukawwan. See Muḥaṣṣal, p. 135.

from the Māturīdites, in maintaining that takwīn is not eternal but it is originated and subsists in God's essence.¹ But they distinguished between takwīn and mukawwan or between origination and originated, creation and created. For them creation is a temporal thing subsisting in God's essence, and the created is separate. The Karrāmites maintained that God has been eternally creator, sustainer and benefactor even without the existence of the acts of creation, sustenance and benefaction.² In this respect the views of the Karrāmites and the Māturīdites are identical. The Karrāmites, however, maintained that God has been eternally creating not because of creation (khalq) but because of a creative faculty (khāliqiyya), similarly sustaining by a sustaining faculty (rāziqqiyya) which means respectively His power to create and His power to grant sustenance. To them this power is eternal while the acts of creating and sustaining originate in Him in time through his power.³ The Karrāmites meant by God being eternally creator and sustainer, His potential power to create and to sustain; "they did not, however, say that He has eternally been creator of the world."⁴

The Karrāmites agreed with the Māturīdites in ascribing takwīn to God and saw no justification for the Ash'arites' denial of it. At the same time, however, they held that takwīn is

1. Bazdawī, Uṣūl, p. 69.

2. Farq, p. 219.

3. Ibid., p. 219.

4. Ibid., p. 219; Uṣūl, p. 122.

originated and subsists in God's essence. They said that all things originated by God's power, therefore takwīn must be hādīth but not muhdath, because if it was muhdath, then it would require another takwīn and this would entail an endless chain which is impossible.¹ On this conception of takwīn and mukawwan or ihdāth and muhdath and their views concerning God's attributes, the Karrāmites based their theory of the origination and destruction of the world. It would be appropriate to discuss this theory at this point.

1. Bazdawī, Uṣūl, p. 71.

C. The Karrāmites' views of the origination and annihilation of the world

For the Karrāmites' views regarding this point, there are three factors connected with the act of creation and annihilation; God's power; origination (ihdāth), and the originated things (muhdathāt). Concerning God's power, it has already been mentioned that the Karrāmites conceived God's power as a faculty consisting of all the necessities required for actions; its effectiveness, however, is limited to the sphere of ihdāth and does not extend over the created bodies and properties in this world. Ihdāth, which has two aspects, production (ījād) and annihilation (i'dām), is a term used to signify the qualities or ideas which originate in God's essence, such as: God's will to specify an act by existence or non-existence, God's utterance "Be" (Kun), the vision with which He will see the produced object and His hearing of what is created if it is audible.¹ All these qualities are originated and subsisting in God's essence; and to differentiate between them and the originated things of this world, the Karrāmites called the latter muhdathāt.

For the connection between these three factors, the Karrāmites maintained that God's power has influence only over those created objects which subsist in God's essence, that is ihdāth. Ihdāth, to the Karrāmites, is produced by God's power at the time of His creating a body, substance, or any particulars of this world. When God creates a substance, for instance, the will that it should

1. Farq, p. 217; Trans. p. 21.

exist originated in His essence, as well as the word Be, hearing and sight. So with every originated thing five qualities originated in God's essence, viz. Will, K.N., audition and vision; and no body or accident is originated in this world without the arousing of these five phenomena in His essence. The same procedures apply in the case of annihilation, since no body or accidents perish in this world without the production of these five phenomena in God's essence. That is His will that it perish, His command to that whose extinction be desired to become non-existent or perish etc.¹ For the relation between God's power and the muhdathāt, it has already been mentioned that God's power has no influence over them. These muhdathāt are not produced or annihilated by God's power, but through iḥdāth. And through ījād, which God produces in His essence, the world becomes existing, and through i'dām it becomes non-existing.² According to al-Baghdādī, the Karrāmites hold that the creation of every originated thing in this world is caused by God's will to originate it and by His command that it should exist. Similarly its non-existence is by His command that it should perish and His will for its destruction.³ "God's command to everything "Be" is an act of creating that which should be created, and bringing forth that which should be brought forth and of causing destruction to that

1. Farq, pp. 217-18.

2. Tahāfut al-Falāsifa, p. 115.

3. Baghdādī, Uṣūl, p. 50.

which should perish after existing."¹ According to these statements the Karrāmites' views are that the originated things of this world come into being and non-existence through the medium of ihdāth whether it is ījād and i'dām or God's command "Be".

We come to the question whether every act of production and annihilation requires a special originator and annihilator, or that only one is sufficient for all the acts. The Karrāmites gave various answers. Some of them said that this depends on whether these originated things were of the same species or not. If it was the first then one originator would be appropriate, but if these originated things were of various species then many originations were required.² Most of the Karrāmites, however, maintained that every act of origination requires a special originator, and thus with every originated thing, the five qualities exist in God's essence.³

Concerning the point whether ihdāth subsisting in God's essence perishes after the muhdath are brought into being, or whether it endures and is imperishable, the Karrāmites hold different views. To al-Baghdādī, some of them hold that the non-existence of the things originated in God's essence, is possible, but most of them considered it as absurd. Both groups, however, agreed that God's essence will not in the future become devoid of the creations inhering in Him; although He was devoid of them at the beginning of

1. Farq, p. 221.

2. Milal, pp. 81-82; Iqdām, p. 114.

3. Iqdām, p. 114.

time. To al-Baghdādī, this view is similar to the opinion of those who upheld the Hylie hypothesis that primordial matter was eternally a substance devoid of properties until the accidents came to exist in it; "It shall henceforth not be devoid of them."¹ This similarity between the Karrāmites' views and those of aṣḥāb al-Hayūlā will be discussed later. Concerning the Karrāmites' view regarding the extinction or endurance of ihdāth, ash-Shahrastānī mentioned that one of the Karrāmites' principles was that the entities originated in God's essence will necessarily endure.² They can never pass away after they have existed; they must remain for ever and it is impossible that they should be annihilated.³

The Karrāmites denied the non-existence of ihdāth for two reasons. Firstly: if it were possible that these originated things could become non-existent, then successive originated things would subsist in God's essence, and it would necessarily follow that God is similar to substance in this respect.⁴ Secondly; if the non-existence of ihdāth is assumed to be possible, it would be either by God's power or by i'dām produced by God in His essence. But it cannot be by God's power because this will lead to the subsisting of non-existing things (mu'dam) in God's essence. They explained this point by stating that the act of non-existing is supposed to be by i'dām, so if it is produced by God's power without

1. Farg, p. 218; Trans. p. 22.

2. Milal, p. 82.

3. Iqdām, pp. 105, 115.

4. Milal, p. 82.

the mediation of i'dām, then it would be possible that all the non-existing things, including the things of this world, would be produced by God's power. Similarly the bringing of these things into existence will be by God's power without ījād; and since God's power is connected only with the thing which subsists in His essence, then these mu'damāt and muhdathāt will be existing in His essence, and God will be the locus of muhdathāt.¹ If the non-existence of ihdath is supposed to be by i'dām, this i'dām would need another i'dām and this would lead to an endless chain.² For these reasons the Karrāmites ruled out the possibility of the non-existence of ihdath.

Regarding the originated things of this world, most of the Karrāmites held that these muhdathāt will not perish³ but that they change from state to state according to the change of accidents. The Karrāmites believed that whatever becomes non-existent after its being existent, whether it was body or accident, could not have another existence. Therefore to demonstrate the possibility of bodily resurrection, the Karrāmites maintained the impossibility of the non-existence of bodies. They interpreted the Qur'ānic verses which implies that bodies become existent in the hereafter, after their being non-existent, as meaning the gathering of the scattered parts of the bodies and not a restoration of what has ceased to exist.⁴ Because no body or accident, which has ceased

1. Ibid., pp. 82-83.

2. Ibid., p. 83.

3. Farq, p. 218.

4. Baghdādī, Usūl, p. 234.

to be existent, can be renewed; another like it, however, might be created. These views of the Karrāmites led them eventually to believe like the philosophers in the endurance of the world, which will not come to an end. The Karrāmites argued that if the non-existence of the world was possible it would be either by an act of annihilation (i'dām), or by the occurrence of contradictory elements (ṭrū'did) or by the absence of one of its essential compositions. They ruled out all these factors as cause of the destruction of the world, and thus maintained that the world is eternal.¹

The Criticism of the Karrāmites' views of origination and Annihilation

The Karrāmites' views regarding creation and annihilation have been criticised and refuted by the Ash'arite theologians. Al-Ghazālī refuted the Karrāmites' assumption concerning the existence of ījād and i'dām as qualities subsisting in God's essence, and by which the world became existent and non-existent, because this idea would lead to the notion that God is a locus of originated things, and because the existence of ījād and i'dām is inconceivable. What one conceives from the act of creation are only an existence related to power and will and the thing God has power over (maqdūr), that is the world. "Anything apart from these", al-Ghazālī says "is inconceivable", and the same applies to the act of annihilation.² Al-Ghazālī rejected the Karrāmites' views that God created ījād in His essence at the time He created the world, by stating that the particularization of ījād by this certain time necessitates a particularizer,

1. Muḥaṣṣal, p. 98. for the details of their arguments and for ar-Rāzī's criticism.

2. al-Ghazālī, Tahāfut, al-Falāsifa, p. 115.

and this latter would need another, and thus would lead to an endless chain which is impossible.¹

Concerning the Karrāmite views that God created the world by His qawl or His command to it "Be", al-Ghazālī demonstrated the absurdity of such a view by saying that the subsisting of sounds, i.e. Kun, in God's essence is impossible. Secondly, God's command "Be" is originated, so if it was originated without another command then there would be no reason why the world should not be originated without the command "Be"; if it was originated by another command, this other command would need a further command, and this would lead to an endless chain. Thirdly, God's command "Be" was an address directed to the world; and the world was either existing or non-existing at the time of the address. If the world was non-existent, it could not apprehend that command, and thus could not be addressed by it. If it was existent, however, how could God command an existent to be existing?²

It is obvious that al-Ghazālī's criticism of the Karrāmites' theory is quite convincing, and it shows the weakness of the sect's views on this point. The Karrāmites, however, might have said that ījād and i'dām are originated in God's essence by His power and then there would be no question of their need of another originator as al-Ghazālī maintained. This very point, however, was taken against the sect by ash-Shahrastānī who said, "if ījād

1. Iqtisād, p. 163.

2. Ibid., p. 164.

and i'dām were originated by God's power, then why should it not be possible that all originated things were originated by God's power, whether they were ihdāth or muhdathāt? There was no difference between ihdāth and muhdathāt in that both were not and then became".¹

Ash-Shahrastānī's argument presents a real challenge to the Karrāmites' views, and they cannot avoid its consequence, unless they admit that ījād and i'dām have no real effect in the act of origination. But do the Karrāmites hold such a view? A statement attributed to Ibn-l-Hayṣam, and mentioned by Ibn-Abi-l-Ḥadīd might imply such a view. It said that the Karrāmites maintained that when God creates a body, he creates an idea (ma'na) subsisting in His essence and that is ihdāth; the body becomes existent at the same time as the idea, or immediately after it.² If this statement were accepted as representing the Karrāmites' views, in spite of the contradictory views ascribed to them earlier, the Karrāmites might have escaped ash-Shahrastānī's objection, otherwise that objection would remain.

The Ash'arite criticism of the Karrāmite views of God being the locus of originated things

The Ash'arites refuted the Karrāmites' doctrine that God is the locus of temporal phenomena, on the ground that it will inevitably lead to the result that God is originated. The Ash'arites

1. Iqdām, p. 117.

2. Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāgha, Vol. 1, p. 661.

based their arguments on the following points:

1. "If the originated things inhered in God's essence, He would be depicted by them, and thus a change would occur in His essence. But change is a sign of origination, since it necessitates someone to bring it about. It follows that God will be determined by someone else and originated, which is impossible."¹
2. "If God was receptive of originated things, He would never be free from them; and whatever is not free from originated things, is itself originated. It follows that whatever is receptive of originated things is originated. It might be said also, that bodies are receptive of originated things, and thus they must be originated. Since it is impossible for God to be originated, therefore it would be impossible for Him to be receptive of originated things."²
3. "If it was possible that God was depicted by the originated things, this possibility would be a requirement of His quiddity, and it necessarily follows that this possibility must have happened in eternity. But this is impossible, because the possibility of God being depicted by the originated things in eternity, depends on the possibility of their existence in eternity. And the latter is impossible, for eternity means the negation of primariness, and the origination is its affirmation, and the combination between these two is impossible."³

1. Iqdām, p. 115.

2. Ma 'ālim, pp. 34-5; Arba 'īn, pp. 20-21; Irshād, p. 26.

3. Muḥaṣṣal, p. 114.

These arguments introduced by the Ash'arites are based on two points. 1) God must be depicted by those originated things since they subsist in His essence. 2) The affirmation that originated things inhere in God's essence will inevitably lead to the notion that God is originated.

The Karrāmites on their part rejected these two obligations. They strongly emphasized that though the originated things subsist in God's essence they do not become attributes for Him. They affirmed that temporal phenomena such as creation, will and speech are subsisting in God's essence, but said that He is creator by His creativeness (khāliqiyya) not by creation, willer by His willingness (murīdiyya) not by will and speaker by His speakingness, not by speech.¹ Al-Juwaynī rightly remarked that the Karrāmites' affirmation of originated things and their denial at the same time of God being depicted by them is self-contradiction. Because if it is possible for an idea (ma'na) to inhere in a place in the unseen world without the place being described by it, then it will be possible for sayings (aqwāl), knowledge and wills to exist in places in the visible world, without the places being endowed with them. This to al-Juwaynī, makes realities confused and leads people to ignorance (jahālāt).²

The Karrāmites also maintained that the rise of these originated things in God's essence, does not entail God's origination or make Him determined by temporal causes because these originated

1. Iqdām, p. 114, Milal, p. 82; Farq, p. 219.

2. Irshād, p. 27.

things are mere ideas of a relative and proportional type. The origination of such ideas in a place does not necessitate a change in or the origination of the place. What causes change and origination are the originated things which involve a change in the essence of the place; such as the change from whiteness to blackness.¹

To support their view that God is the locus of originated ideas or qualities, the Karrāmites introduced the following arguments: they said that the Ash'arites agreed with us that it is possible for ideas in general to subsist in God's essence, but there is no difference between eternal ideas and originated ones, apart from qidam in regard to the eternal ideas and origination regarding the others. Qidam cannot be considered as the cause of eternal ideas being inherent in God's essence, because it is an expression for non-beginning which is a negative definition, and thus should not be included in the requisite. Then the only remaining cause for the eternal ideas subsisting in God's essence, is their being ideas. But the originated ideas shared with them in this respect, therefore it follows that it is possible for originated ideas to subsist in God's essence.²

Moreover, the Karrāmites claim that all intelligent people hold the doctrine that God is the locus of temporal ideas, though they verbally deny it. The Mu'tazilites, for instance, asserted

1. Ibn-Rushd, Tahāfut at-Tahāfut, pp. 79-80; Sharh Nahj al-Balāgha, Vol. 1, p. 662.

2. Arba'īn, p. 122.

that God wills and dislikes by positive and negative acts of volition respectively and these are originated in no place, but the attributes murīdiyya and kārihiyya originate in God's essence. The Mu'tazilites also hold that when the thing seen and the thing heard come into being, a faculty to hear (sāmi'iyya) and a faculty to see (mubṣiriyya) originate in God's essence. The Mu'tazilites did not use the term origination (hudūth) but used the term regeneration (tajadud). This, however, does not change the fact that they had asserted that originated things subsist in God's essence. Abū-l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, the Mu'tazilite affirmed knowledge which regenerated in God's essence according to the regeneration of the things known. As to the Ash'arites, they believe in the abrogation (naskh), which they interpreted as either the abolition or the termination of an existing rule. By this they have admitted an occurrence of change in God's speech, because whatever becomes terminated or abolished, is in fact non-existent after it was existing.¹ Moreover the Ash'arites admitted a change in the connections (ta'alluqāt) between God's knowledge, power, will and the things known, the things over which He has power and the things willed respectively. All these are originated things and subsist in God's essence.

Muslim philosophers believe in the Relationships (iḍāfāt) as real existing entities, and according to their view God exists with the origination of every originated thing. His being with

1. See pp. 1073-1090

that originated thing, however, is a relative description originated in His essence. Abū-ʿl-Barakāt al-Baghdādī, the philosopher, affirmed the existence of originated wills and knowledge in God's essence, and claimed that the recognition of God as lord of this world cannot be conceived without the maintenance of the doctrine that He is the locus of these originated ideas.¹ These examples, the Karrāmites said, show that most Muslim sects hold that an originated thing subsists in God's essence.

Ar-Rāzī refuted the Karrāmites' argument that the only difference between the eternal ideas and the originated ones is the eternity in one and origination in the other. To him, it is quite possible that the eternal ideas are different from the originated ones by their entities and special characteristics. Even if the only difference is eternity qidam, why should it not be considered as a requisite? The Karrāmites' assumption that it is a negative definition is inadmissible because qidam is the negation of previous non-existence, and the negation of the negation is affirmation, therefore qidam must be considered in this case.²

Ar-Rāzī also rejected the Karrāmites' claim that all intelligent people hold their views - that God is locus of originated qualities. He distinguished between three kinds of attributes, and showed in which one change is possible: (1) The

1. Arbaʿīn, pp. 118-19; cf. Mawāqif, Vol. 8, p. 37; Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāgha, Vol. 1, p. 262.

2. Arbaʿīn, p. 122.

real attributes such as blackness and whiteness: these are free from the relationships (idāfāt). (2) The real attributes which have certain relationship such as knowledge and power. Knowledge is a real attribute, but it has special connection with the thing known; likewise power which is a real attribute but has connection with the thing over which God has power. (3) The pure proportions (nisab) and relationships such as the thing being before or after another, or its being on the left or right of it. The change in this third kind is inescapable and what the Karrāmites recalled from the views of Mu'tazilites, Ash'arites and the philosophers are of this kind which no one can argue about. But the Karrāmites, in opposition to all these groups, assumed a change in the real attributes.¹

Ar-Rāzī's statement that the Karrāmites affirmed a change in the real attributes cannot be taken for granted for the following reasons: Firstly, the Karrāmites clearly distinguished between the kind of attributes which ar-Rāzī called real attributes free from relationships and the pure relationships and connections. They clearly stated that the first kind do not subsist in God's essence because they entail change in His essence. Secondly, the Karrāmites considered the second kind according to ar-Rāzī's definition, i.e. the connections between God's knowledge, will and the things known and willed, as of the same character as the third kind, that is, the pure relationships. To them this kind are mere ideas of relationships and proportional type, and God is not

1. Arba'īn, p. 120; cf. Mawāqif, Vol. 8, p. 37.

described by them, and they do not entail change in His essence. From this it seems that the real difference between the Karrāmites and their opponents concerning this point, is not so wide as it appears to be and possibly was caused by deliberate misrepresentation and misunderstanding of the sect's views.

The Origin of the Karrāmites' views regarding God being the locus of originated things

The question regarding the origin of ideas and views, is difficult to be answered, unless clear evidences which show real contact and similarities between the original ideas and those assumed to be derived from them, are established. Concerning the Karrāmites' views on this point, both al-Juwaynī and al-Isfarā'īnī, referred to the Magians as being the origin from which the Karrāmites derived their views concerning God being the locus of originated things.¹ According to al-Isfarā'īnī, the dualists believe that Yazdān was once struck by the thought that an adversary, who challenged his kingdom, might appear. Because of this thought corruption was produced in Yazdān's essence, and from it he created the devil. From this concept, Isfarā'īnī said the Karrāmites worked out their idea that originated things subsist in God's essence.² Such an assumption might easily be refuted by referring to the Karrāmites' views expounded above, and in them one can hardly find any similarity with those of the Magians.

1. Luma' al-Adilla...p.25. ed. F.H. Tawfīq, Ph.D. Thesis, Edinburgh (1960); Tabṣīr, p. 67.

2. Tabṣīr, p. 67.

In much more precise terms, al-Baghdādī pointed to a similarity between the Karrāmites' views, that God will not become devoid in the future of the creations inhering in Him, although He was devoid of them at the beginning of time, and the opinion of the upholder of the hylic hypothesis that primordial matter was eternally a substance devoid of properties until the accidents came to be in it. It would henceforth not be devoid of them.¹

In spite of the accuracy al-Baghdādī has shown in drawing this comparison between these two views, he did not define the upholders of the hylic hypothesis. It is quite possible that, al-Baghdādī was referring to the platonists, since it is known that Plato believed that the world was primordial matter in which originated things became existent. Plato's theory of ideas taught that the existing things of this world have pure forms which exist in the Heavenly sphere: "these forms do neither perish nor corrupt, but they are eternal: what perishes and becomes corrupted are the existing things of this world."²

A similarity between some aspects of the Karrāmites' views, and these platonists' concepts might be found. And one might cautiously suggest that the Karrāmites' concept of ihdāth as ideas subsisting in God's essence and not passing away was possibly influenced by Plato's theory, or, as Tritton indicates, was a faint echo of Plato.³ One might also recall, the Karrāmites'

1. Farq, p. 218.

2. Farābī, al-Jam' Bayn Ra'yai al-Hakīmayn, p. 105.

3. Tritton, Muslim Theology, p. 109.

argument that God is body, which is referred to earlier. In that argument the Karrāmites widely utilized the Platonic theory of ideas. But on the whole the question of similarity and influence, needs special treatment, and it is outside the scope of this thesis.

The determinist views have been ascribed to John Ibn-Safwān, who is believed to have said that no one acts in reality except God alone. He maintains that God is the only agent and men have the acts ascribed to them only by way of metaphor. Thus it is said that the stone moves, the sphere revolves, the sun sets, and yet it is God who does that with the stone, sphere and the sun. God has, however, created for man a power (*qudra*) by which the act takes place, and the will for its choice whereby he wills it just in the same way as He has created for man height by which he is tall and

1. Watt, *Free Will and Predestination*, p. 48.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-14.

CHAPTER IV

Free Will and Predestination

The freedom and determinism of the actions of human beings was one of the problems which agitated not only Muslim thinkers, but was and still is among the most vexed and controversial questions. It is also closely linked with the conception of human responsibility on the one hand, and Divine omnipotence on the other.¹ In spite of the Qur'ānic verses which seem contradictory regarding this problem, it is nevertheless clear that in the Qur'ān man is presented as a responsible agent, and at the same time the absoluteness of God's power and will is strongly emphasized.² By stressing only one of the Qur'ānic aspects, Muslim thinkers came to adopt varying views regarding this problem, ranging from extreme determinism to the freedom of man in his acts.

The determinist views have been ascribed to Jahm Ibn-Ṣafwān, who is believed to have said that no one acts in reality except God alone. He maintains that God is the only agent and men have the acts ascribe to them only by way of metaphor. "Thus it is said that the stone moves, the sphere revolves, the sun sets, and yet it is God who does that with the stone, sphere and the sun. God has, however, created for man a power (qudra) by which the act takes place, and the will for its choice whereby he wills it just in the same way as He has created for man height by which he is tall and

1. Watt, Free will and Predestination, p. 48.

2. Ibid., pp. 12-14.

colour by which he is coloured.¹ Jahm did not differentiate between compulsory actions such as the movement of man's hand shaking with fright and its movement shaking voluntarily; all, to him, are of compulsory nature. To Jahm man has no freedom of will, and no choice of action; man is entirely helpless working as the machine does, he has no power over his acts, and has no responsibility for them. Jahm was obsessed by God's overwhelming power and majesty, and thus he accepted those Qur'ānic verses which show the absoluteness of the Divine power and will, and ignored the other verses which ascribe to man some liberty of will and power over his actions.

In contrast to these determinist views, the Mu'tazilites went to the other extreme and advocated the absolute freedom of man in his acts. The Mu'tazilites strove to establish God's justice which to them requires man's freedom. They distinguished between compulsory and voluntary actions, and unanimously agreed that man decides upon and creates his voluntary acts, whether good or bad; and that he deserves reward or punishment in the hereafter for what he does. The Mu'tazilites argued that if man is not the author of his own acts and if these acts are forced on him by a pre-arranged Divine decree, the imposition of the task would be pointless, and the idea of man's responsibility would be preposterous. Without the independence of man in his acts, command, prohibition, praise,

1. Ash'ari, Māqālāt, p. 279. in Watt, op.cit., p. 99; Fargh, p. 211; Milal, pp. 60-61.

and blame, reward and punishment would be absurd.¹ Moreover God does not will nor create evil because He is the most righteous and just, and the creator of evil works would be an evildoer, which is impossible for the righteous God.²

To support their views the Mu'tazilites quoted many Qur'ānic verses such as those which ascribe action to man, praise him for doing good and blame him for doing bad, and the verses which show distinction between God's actions and those of man, and that some decisions were left to human will:³ All these verses the Mu'tazilites said indicate that man has will and power over his voluntary acts, and that he is a free agent and responsible for what he does.

Similar to the Mu'tazilites, the Ash'arites distinguished between compulsory and voluntary acts, but they did not consider the latter as predetermined as the Jabrites did, or agreed with the Mu'tazilites in granting man free choice, power and will. The Ash'arites strongly emphasized the supremacy of God's power over the affairs of this world, including the acts of man, which are all created and related to God's power.⁴ They argued that the acquired actions of man are possible in themselves, and every possible thing is subject to God's universal power.⁵ Thus these actions ascribed

1. Arba'īn, p. 233.

2. Milal, p. 30.

3. Muḥaṣṣal, pp. 142-3.

4. Farq, p. 334.

5. Mawāqif, Vol. 8, p. 148.

to man cannot be created by his power, because this would entail the collaboration of two effective powers to produce one effect which is impossible.¹ Moreover if man is independently and voluntarily the creator of his actions, he must have knowledge of their details, but this is not the case, therefore he is not the creator of his acts.² Man has no effective power over his acts; he has, however, been given some sort of subordinate power of the appropriation and acquisitiveness. Thus the action of the creature is created, originated, and produced by God, but it is acquired by the creature, by which is meant its being brought into connection with his power and will without these producing any effect from him on it, or any introduction to its existence; he is merely a locus for it.³

By this concept of acquisition (kasb), the Ash'arites assumed that they had taken the middle path between the extreme views of the Jabrites, and the Mu'tazilites. But a close examination of these views, especially of al-Ash'arī himself, will not support their claim. It is sufficient to point out that al-Ash'arī had denied any effect of man's power over his actions, and considered that both man's power and the thing over which he has power were created by God. It is quite evident that such a view does not differ in essence from that of the determinists.⁴

1. Ibid., Vol. 8, p.

2. Muḥaṣṣal, p. 141.

3. Macdonald, E.I.¹ art. "Kasb" Vol. 11, p. 786.

4. Muḥaṣṣal, p. 144.

Concerning the Karrāmites' views regarding this problem, it is believed that they hold that all acts, whether compulsory, voluntary, good or bad, happen according to the Destiny (qadā') and Decree (qadār) of God. God wills all the created things whether good or evil, and creates all the existing things, what is to be considered honourable or what is base.¹ It is quite obvious that the Karramite views in this respect are similar to and can be considered as identical with those of the Ash'arites. But regarding whether man has power over his actions, the Karrāmites' views seem to be slightly different from the Ash'arites. The Karrāmites ascribed to man an originated power through which he acts and they described the man's action^{as} an acquisition (kasb) as the Ash'arites do. But this originated ^{power}~~will~~ is not ineffective as is that of the Ash'arites. To the Karrāmites this originated ^{power}~~will~~ has effect in affirming a meaning (fā'ida) which is additional to the act being produced or created by God. This additional meaning is the cause of the imposition of the task (taklīf), and as a result of that additional meaning, reward and punishment are measured out for man in the hereafter.²

Thus, though the Karrāmites as well as the Ash'arites used the term (kasb), the views of the two parties are not identical, and the Karrāmites' views are quite different, at least from those of al-Ash'ari himself. Al-Ash'ari has clearly stated that man's power is ineffective, whereas the Karrāmites have ascribed to it

1. Milal, p. 84.

2. Ibid, p. 84.

some kind of effect, although they did not go to the extent of giving man complete freedom over his acts as the Mu'tazilites did. This difference between the Ash'arites and Karrāmites becomes clear by the latter's assertion that capacity (istitā'a) comes before the action,¹ which is quite opposite to the Ash'arites' views that capacity goes along with the action. On this point, however, the Karrāmites' view is identical with that of the Mu'tazilites. And on the whole one can conclude that the Karrāmites' views on the problem of free will and predestination are much closer to those of the Mu'tazilites than to those of the Ash'arites.

But if the views of the Karrāmites and Mu'tazilites on this point are nearly similar, we find also that the views of the two parties are identical on such points as the criteria of good and bad, whether it is incumbent upon God to do salutary and good things to His servants, and whether it is incumbent upon man to know God even before the sending of prophets.

The Criterion of Good and Bad

Concerning the first point of the criterion of good and bad the Mu'tazilites maintain that the criterion or standard of moral judgement between good and bad, is reason. They maintain that goodness and badness are qualities belonging intrinsically to what is good or evil.² Every human act, they said, has some inherent merit or demerit which entitles its doer to admiration and reward

1. Bazdawī, Usūl, p. 115.

2. Milal, p. 31; Mawāqif, Vol. 8, p. 183.

or scorn and punishment. Goodness and evil are innate in the essence of the things themselves, and the human intellect is capable of perceiving that goodness or evil of the thing. The Mu'tazilites denied that revelation or law are the cause of the thing being good or evil, the law, however, affirms the judgement of reason. Truth to them is good and rewardable, and falsehood is bad and punishable, not because God declares them to be so, or because of religious commendation or condemnation but, rather, because of their inner values which are reached by Reason.

No details have been given about the Karrāmites' view concerning this point, apart from the fact that they had maintained the same views as the Mu'tazilites. They said that reason is the criterion by which the goodness and badness of actions can be perceived.¹

These views of the Mu'tazilites and Karrāmites were opposed by the Ash'arites, who maintained that good and evil are used in three different meanings, they are used (1) as synonymous with perfection and defect, (2) as corresponding to gain or loss in worldly affairs. In these two senses, the Ash'arites said, reason can be the criterion of what is good or what is bad. (3) But good and evil are also used in the sense of what is commendable and praiseworthy or condemnable in this world, and rewardable or punishable in the hereafter. In this sense it is revelation and

1. Minhāj as-Sunna. Vol. 1. p. 125; Milal, p. 84.

not reason, which determines what is good and what is bad. And in this case goodness and evil are not qualities inhering in the actions, and the things are not intrinsically good or bad, and there is nothing in them which would make them rewardable or punishable. The criterion here is revelation which alone can convert previously declared good into bad and vice versa.¹

Concerning the second point that man must know God by reason even before the sending of the prophets, the views of the Mu'tazilites and Karrāmites are identical. Both of them hold that it is incumbent upon man to know God by reason, and the sending of the prophets with laws was a favour bestowed on man by God.² The Ash'arites on their part admitted that the knowledge of God necessarily comes through reason, but only revelation makes it incumbent on men; reason does not impose religious obligations.³

For the third point, whether it is incumbent upon God to do what is good and salutary to His servants, the Mu'tazilites' view was that the justice of God makes it incumbent upon Him not to do anything contrary to justice and equity. They maintain that the wise can only do what is salutary and good, and that God's wisdom always keeps in view the welfare of His servants. Therefore God cannot be cruel to them, and cannot renounce that which is salutary. He cannot ask his servants to do that which is impossible or place a burden on them which is greater than they can bear.

1. Muḥaṣṣal, p. 147; Arba 'In, pp.246-49; Mawāqif, Vol. 8, pp.145-6.

2. Mīlāl, p. 31.

3. Iqdām, p. 317; Trans, p. 119.

Regarding the Karrāmites' views on this point, ash-Shahrastānī mentioned that the Karrāmites did not hold that reason makes it incumbent upon God to keep in view what is salutary and good for his servants as the Mu'tazilites maintained.¹ But statements mentioned by al-Baghdādī seem to refute ash-Shahrastānī's proposition. "In the field of justice and injustice", al-Baghdādī says, "the Karrāmites proposed some astonishing theses. One of them is that the first entity which God created must have necessarily been a living body, endowed with reason."² They maintain that if He had begun by creating inanimate objects He would not be wise."³ "They maintain that if God had created mankind while knowing that not one of them would believe in Him, His creation would be mere sport; but it pleased Him to create all of them, because He knew that some of them would believe in Him."⁴ The Karrāmiyya also maintain that God's justice does not allow the deprivation of the lives of children about whom He knows, that if He spared them to the time of their maturity they would be believers. Nor is it right of Him to bring death upon an infidel who if he had been spared for a period of time would have become a believer unless an act of righteousness to someone else is involved in the premature death which He brings upon him."⁵ The Karrāmiyya also

1. Milal, p. 84.

2. cf. Mawāqif, Vol. 8, p. 99; Uṣūl, pp. 150-51.

3. Farq, pp. 220-1; trans. p. 25.

4. Ibid., p. 221, trans. p. 25.

5. Ibid., p. 221, trans. p. 25.

hold that if God had confined the charge to mankind to one messenger from the beginning of time to the day of judgement, and continued the law of the first messenger, He would not be just.¹ From these statements it becomes clear that the Karrāmites were reiterating almost the same views as the Mu'tazilites in so far as the problem of salāh and aslah is concerned. Ash-Shahrastānī's proposition seems therefore completely invalid.

Against these views of the Mu'tazilites and the Karrāmites, the Ash'arite maintain that since God has power over thing nothing whatsoever can be said to be incumbent upon Him. He does what He desires and rules as He wishes. "If He had created the unbelievers and not the believers, or if He had created the believers and not the infidels it would still have been possible, and would not have impinged His justice."²

1. Ibid., pp. 222-23. Trans. p. 27.

2. Ibid., p. 221 ; Iqtisād, p. 181; Muḥaṣṣal, pp. 147-48.

CHAPTER V

The Karrāmiyya Doctrine of īmān

The Karrāmites are notorious for holding that īmān is only a verbal confession by the tongue (igrār bil-lisān), which includes neither assent nor work.¹ It is believed that the Karrāmites were the first to hold such view and thus were severely criticized for it by their opponents. Some heresiographers, however, mentioned that the Karrāmites meant by the term igrār not the pronunciation of the shahāda, but were referring by that term to the primal covenant taken at the beginning of Creation.² This chapter will deal with the Karrāmites' concept of īmān as well as the far-reaching results to which their views on this problem had led. But the Karrāmiyya sect is considered by al-Ash'arī as one of the Murji'ite sub-sects as far as the problem of īmān is concerned.³ Therefore it is appropriate to give not only an account of the Murji'ite view, but to mention briefly some of the views of other Muslim sects regarding this problem; since the Murji'ite views (including those of the Karrāmites) were formulated as a reaction to the other sects' views.

To begin with it might be said that the term īmān has been mentioned many times in the Qur'ān, but no specific definition of

1. Maqālāt, p. 144; Milal, p. 84; Fiṣal, Vol. 2, p. 112; Irshād, p. 224; ar-Rāzī, Tafsīr, Vol. 1, p. 164. Ibn-Taymiyya, Kitāb al-īmān, p. 118.

2. Baghdādī, Farq, p. 223; al-Isfarā'īnī, Tabṣīr, p. 69; cf. Mawāqif Vol. 8, p. 400.

3. Maqālāt, p. 141.

it was given. The word Ma'minūn, however, is used to describe those who believe in God and His apostle and the Last Day, and perform certain duties and religious obligations.¹ Similarly the Tradition does not give certain definitions to īmān but enumerates its objects.²

The rise of the Khārijites in the period which followed the assassination of the third Caliph 'Uthmān (36/656) gave the question, "Who is a mu'min?" and later "what is īmān?" a new importance. Motivated by their puritanical concept of the Muslim community, the Khārijites started questioning everyone's faith and drew a sharp demarcation between those who fully believe and practise religion, and those who, though believers, committed some sins. The Khārijites consider only the first as members of the community and depicted the latter as infidels, devoid of faith. They conceived the Muslim community as one whose membership was restricted to those who reached certain standards of moral attainment.³ Therefore they strongly emphasized the importance of work as a condition which qualifies a person for membership of the community. Such a concept and views led the Khārijites to the belief that there is no īmān without work, and that whoever commits a grave sin is kāfir, excluded from the community and will perish for ever in Hell.⁴

1. See (Q. XXIII:1); (Q. XXIV:62); (Q. XLIX:15).

2. Bukhārī, Sahīh, 2, 73, 40. see Muslim Creed, pp. 123, 131, 35.

3. Watt, "The Concept of īmān in Islamic theology", Der Islam, Vol. 43 (1967), p. 1.

4. Ibid., p. 1-2; Muslim Theology, pp. 38-9; Muslim Creed, p. 47. E.I⁸ article "khāridjites", p. 248.

These Khārijites' views were later adopted, to some extent, by the Mu'tazilites, who held the distinctive doctrine that the sinner is neither a kāfir nor a mu'min, but is in an intermediate position (manzila bayn al-manzilatayn).¹ In spite of the slightly different views held by various groups of the Mu'tazilites - regarding the definition of īmān,² they have, in common, identified īmān and works whether supererogatory or obligatory; or īmān and the avoidance of grave sin.³

The Murji'ites, however, hold views opposite to those of the Khārijites and the Mu'tazilites regarding the definition of īmān, and the destiny of sinners. From the views of the twelve Murji'ite sub-sects mentioned by the heresiographers,⁴ it appears that all the Murji'ites agree on the point of excluding works from the definition of īmān. Such view is a natural outcome of the Murji'ites' political attitude and their concept of the Muslim Community and its membership. In contrast to the Khārijites' views that whoever committed grave sins is a kāfir, the Murji'ites asserted that the decision on such a person could not be taken by men, but must be left to God on the Last Day. These views led the Murji'ites to support the Umayyad rulers on religious grounds

1. Watt, op.cit., p. 2.

2. Ar-Rāzī, Tafsīr, Vol. 1, p. 164; Dictionary of Technical Terms, Vol. 1. p. 95.

3. Tabaqāt al-Mu'tazila, p. 8; Muslim Creed, p. 133.

4. Ash'arī, Maqālāt, pp. 132-141.

on the one hand, and on the other, to widen their concept of the Muslim community to include all those who claim to be Muslim, irrespective of their conformity to Islamic religious observations.

In the Murji'ite theology the effect of these views is evident. As Wensinck has already stated, "the Murji'ite gave predominance in their definition of īmān to knowledge".¹ At the same time, however, we find considerable importance was given to the verbal acknowledgement or confession by the tongue with the total omission of work. Moreover, īmān was considered an entity of its own; graver sin could not impair it, nor could good works increase it. All this was aimed at avoiding the exclusion of a man from the community because he had sinned.²

It is noticeable that within the framework of irjā' we find the extreme view of the Jahmites and similar groups who hold that īmān is only knowledge, and the Karrāmites who maintained that it is only verbal confession. We also find that Abū-Ḥanīfa believes that īmān consists of confessing with the tongue, believing with the mind and knowing with the heart. Confessing alone is not īmān to him for if this were so, all hypocrites would be faithful. Neither is knowledge alone īmān, for if this were so all the people of the book would be faithful.³

Abū-Ḥanīfa's concept of īmān as Knowledge of God and verbal confession of Him was fully adopted by the Maturidites.⁴ While

1. Muslim Creed, p. 132.

2. Watt, Islamic Philosophy and Theology, p. 34.

3. Fiqh Akbar, 1, Wensinck, Muslim Creed, p. 125.

4. Sharḥ Fiqh Akbar, p. 7.

the Ash'arites seem to have given more weight to assent (tasdīq) and consider it as the constituent pillar of belief, since inward attestation suffices if outward confession is impossible. Good works are an obligatory sequel to faith but are excluded from the definition of īmān. Works and verbal confession are only manifestations of īmān.¹ Another body of the Sunnite Muslims, however, hold that īmān consists of the acceptance in the mind ('aql), confession by the tongue (qawl) and work.²

Having these general outlines of the sects' views concerning īmān, we might proceed further to examine the Karrāmiyya concept concerning this problem.

The Karrāmite Concept of īmān

It has already been mentioned that Ash'ari stated that the Karrāmites believe that īmān is a verbal confession, that is, public acknowledgement by the tongue, not by the heart; knowledge by the heart, or, for that matter, anything other than assent by the tongue, must be excluded from the definition of īmān. They maintain that the hypocrites of the period of the apostle were true believers.

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1. Tamhīd, p. 346; Iqdām, p. 472; Uṣūl, pp. 247-8; Muḥaṣṣal, p. 174. Ma'ālim, p. 144. Concerning al-Ash'ari's views, in both the Maqālāt and the Ibāna he stated that īmān consists of word and deed and is subject to increase and decrease. Maqālāt, p. 293; Ibāna, p. 8. In al-Luma', however, he used tasdīq as definition of īmān, p. 123. Ash-Shahrastānī explained tasdīq used by al-Ash'arī as Ma'rifa, igrār and 'amal. Iqdām, p. 472.
 2. Ibn Ḥazm, Fīṣal, Vol. 3, p. 191; Ibn-Taymiyya, īmān, p. 250.

Kufr to the Karrāmites, is an unbelief or denial of God by the tongue.¹

A statement similar to that of al-Ash'arī, was mentioned by Ibn-Ḥazm who maintains that the Karrāmites hold that īmān is nothing but the "saying" by the tongue; and said that as long as a man declares verbally that he believes, he is a believer in the sight of God: even if his inner conviction be kufr, he is a friend of God (wali-Allah) and in the hereafter he will be among the people of Paradise."²

From these statements the Karrāmites, according to their opponents believe that īmān is a verbal confession by the tongue, including neither assent by the heart nor work, and that kufr is similarly verbal denial, therefore the hypocrite is a believer and he will enter paradise. But al-Baghdādī and al-Isfarā'īnī supply us with a version of the Karrāmite concept of īmān completely different from that attributed to them by al-Ash'arī and Ibn-Ḥazm; surprisingly, however, all of them agreed that the Karrāmites maintain that the hypocrite is a true believer.

Quoting al-Baghdādī "the Karrāmites hold that īmān consists only of a single confession made at the beginning of time. Its repetition is not regarded as an act of faith except from an apostate who confesses it after his apostasy. They maintain that it is the confession which was made for the first time by the off-

1. Ash'arī, Maqālāt, pp. 141, 43.

2. Fisal, Vol. 4, p. 204.

spring from the loins of the prophet [i.e. Adam] when they declared: certainly (bala). They believe that this declaration endures for ever, becoming ineffective only in the case of apostasy. They also believe that he who confesses both parts of the shahāda is a believer even if he is a convinced heretic with respect to the apostleship. They also hold that the hypocrites, [concerning whose disbelief God has revealed many verses in which He condemns them as infidels], are believers indeed and that their faith is as pure as that of the prophets and the angels."¹

In agreement with al-Baghdādī, though in more precise terms, al-Isfarā'īnī had this to say: "One of the Karramites' innovations concerning īmān is that they said īmān is only verbal confession. But they did not mean one's public acknowledgement that there is no God but God; they meant that confession which was made by the offspring of Adam at the beginning of time, and which was referred to by God saying 'And when thy Lord brings forth from Adam's children - out of their loins - their offspring and make them witnesses against their own selves by saying Am I Your Lord?' They say 'Yes indeed'". (Q.VII:172)²

From these statements the Karrāmite views might be summarized as holding that īmān is only confession, but it is the confession which was made by the whole people at the beginning of Creation. It will endure and last for ever unless one apostatizes. Shahāda is valid only in the case of apostasy. At the same time confession

1. Farq, p. 223; trans. p. 28; see also, Baghdādī, Uṣūl, p. 250.

2. Tabṣīr, p. 69.

of the shahāda is enough for belief, even from the convinced heretic. The hypocrite is a believer who has the same degree of faith as the apostles and the angels.

The difference between these later statements and those of al-Ash'arī and Ibn-Ḥazm is obvious, because though all of them were talking about confession as a definition of īmān, al-Ash'arī and Ibn-Ḥazm were referring simply to the enunciation of the shahāda, while Baghdādī and Isfarā'īnī were talking about the confession made at the beginning of Creation. The Karrāmite views as presented by al-Baghdādī and Isfarā'īnī are very confused and contradictory. While they defined īmān as the primal confession and considered the enunciation of the shahāda as useless, they accepted the shahāda as belief when made by the convinced heretic (who is in fact an unbeliever). Moreover they consider the hypocrite (who is assumed to have recast the primal confession and thus is, in fact, an unbeliever) as a believer in the real sense of the word.

So it might be asked what is the real definition of īmān to the Karrāmites? - Did they hold it to be a primal confession or was it to them only the enunciation of the shahāda? Moreover, is it possible that the Karrāmites hold these confused and contradictory views, and in this case what will be the explanation? Or have their views been distorted and misrepresented by their opponents?

A statement mentioned by ash-Shahrastānī might help in giving answers to these questions and shed a light on the views of the Karrāmites. According to him, the Karrāmites assert that

īmān is igrār by the tongue, nothing else. It does not include assent by the heart, nor any external work. "But" Ash-Shahrastānī said, "they make a distinction between the problem of calling a man a believer in so far as the formal matter of the present world and the obligations of religious life are concerned on the one hand; and on the other "the same problem in so far as it concerns the conditions of life in the hereafter, and the final reward and punishment. Thus a hypocrite in their view is a believer in the true sense of the word as long as he lives in the present world, but he is doomed to eternal punishment (in the fire) in the hereafter".¹

If one ignores for a while that part of ash-Shahrastānī's statement concerning the definition of īmān as igrār, one finds the remainder highly suggestive. It clearly shows that the Karrāmites made a distinction between the application of the term mu'min in regard to this life, and its application regarding the hereafter; it is therefore possible that they likewise differentiated between the definition of īmān according to these two aspects. And it might be suggested that the Karrāmites define īmān as verbal confession by the tongue as far as the position of a person in this world is concerned; while the position of a person in the hereafter is determined by the confession made at the beginning of creation (i.e. the Primal Covenant). Moreover,

1. Milal, pp. 84-85. Translated by Izutsu in The Concept of Belief in Islamic Theology, p. 152.

ash-Shahrastānī's statement clarifies the Karrāmite views concerning the position of the hypocrite, that they did not consider him as true believer as al-Ash'arī, Baghdādī and al-Isfarā'īnī stated, nor that he will be in paradise in the hereafter as Ibn-Ḥazm claimed. The Karrāmites seem to have said that the hypocrite is a mu'min since he enunciates the shahāda, but only is a mu'min as far as this life is concerned. His position in the hereafter will be with the kāfirs, that is in eternal punishment.

In his Nihāyat al-Iqdām, ash-Shahrastānī gave another statement which coincided with his above mentioned statement in clarifying the sect's views. According to him the Karrāmites defined īmān as confession alone, that is igrār by the tongue, and said that a liar and hypocrite is a believer, not merely in their sight, but in the sight of God.¹ This might suggest that the Karrāmites consider the liar and the hypocrite as a true believer in matters concerning the hereafter. But this does not seem to be the case, because ash-Shahrastānī mentioned that the Karrāmite said the liar and hypocrite is a believer in the sight of God, so that he holds the right to share with the believers in religious laws and regulations, i.e. in the status and privileges conferred by Islam.

Ar-Rāzī's view concerning the Karrāmite conception of īmān does not seem to contradict the notion previously stated that the Karrāmites distinguished between two aspects of īmān; but it does

1. Iqdām, p. 471.

seem to support it. According to him, the Karrāmites define īmān as only the verbal confession by the tongue, and they assert that the hypocrite is a believer in so far as external judgement is concerned, but concerning his inward belief, he is a kāfir. Therefore he has the rights of the believers in this life, but he will be judged as kāfir in the hereafter.¹

The man who seems to have fully understood the Karrāmite views concerning this problem, and presented them in a clear way, is Ibn-Taymiyya. According to Ibn-Taymiyya, the Karrāmites maintain that a hypocrite is a believer, but they added that he will be in the fire for ever because he merely believes formally or externally, and not internally (zāhir "lā-bāṭina"). Only the man who believes internally as well as externally will enter paradise.² The Karrāmites believe that the hypocrite in this world is to be classified as a believer, but in the hereafter his destiny will be completely different from that of the true believer. Ibn-Taymiyya considered those who said that the Karrāmites maintain that a hypocrite will go to paradise, were telling lies against the sect.³ Because all the Muslims, including the Karrāmites, agree that whoever deserves paradise must be a believer internally. It is true, Ibn-Taymiyya said, that the Karrāmites called the hypocrite a believer, and maintained that īmān is only the enunciation of the shahāda, but they, nevertheless, hold that what saves the person

1. ar-Rāzī, Tafsīr, Vol. 1. p. 164.

2. Kitāb al-Īmān, pp. 117-118.

3. Ibid., pp. 118, 182. Ibn-Taymiyya, Majmū'at al-Rasā'il, pp. 41-43.

in the hereafter is only the internal īmān.¹ The Karrāmites, said Ibn-Taymiyya, applied the term mu'min, in the sense in which the Muslims used the term muslim meaning by it in both cases external submission.²

It is obvious from these statements that Ibn-Taymiyya has grasped the real view of the Karrāmite concerning īmān, and why they considered the hypocrite as a believer. He, however, considers that the Karrāmites' views are fundamentally mistaken, and an innovation which nobody before has ever asserted. But in comparison with those views of the Jahmites (i.e. īmān is only knowledge), in this case Ibn-Taymiyya said, the Karrāmites are more in conformity than the Jahmites, with the usage of Arabic, the teaching of the Qur'ān and Reason.³ It is noticeable, however, that neither Ibn-Taymiyya nor ar-Rāzī have mentioned the other views ascribed to the Karrāmites, that is, that īmān is the confession made by all people at the beginning of Creation.

The statements of Shahrastānī, Rāzī and Ibn-Taymiyya (in spite of the remarks put forward against them), coincide in establishing that the Karrāmites maintain that īmān is a verbal confession, and that the man is considered a mu'min in this life if he confesses the shahāda, but to enter paradise he needs an inner and real īmān. The hypocrite is a believer as far as life in this world is concerned, but his destiny in the hereafter

1. īmān, p. 181.

2. Ibid., p. 118.

3. Ibid., p. 118.

is that of the kāfir, i.e. eternal punishment in Hell.

But it might be asked here, why did the Karrāmites define īmān as only the verbal confession of the tongue, and what is the place of the knowledge of God and the assent of the heart in their concept? Did they consider them as useless and unnecessary? Ibn-Taymiyya related the Karrāmites' persistence in such a definition to the general principle of all the Murji'ites, that īmān is an indivisible unit. Because of this, the Jahmites said īmān is one thing in the heart (i.e. knowledge) while the Karrāmites said it is one thing by the tongue (i.e. confession). Both groups in fact were trying to escape from saying that īmān is divisible that is liable to increase and decrease. To him the Karrāmites did not deny the necessity of knowledge and assent, but they exclude them from the definition of īmān fearing that their inclusion might lead to the notion that īmān is divisible.¹

Ibn-Taymiyya's reference to a Murji'ite motivation behind the Karrāmites' definition of īmān as confession is understandable since the Karrāmites were considered as part of the Murji'ite group. But it does not seem that he got the right point by referring to the indivisibility or divisibility of īmān. What seems to me to be the real motive behind this extremist view of the Karrāmites, is that they were greatly influenced by the general view of the Murji'ites concerning the position of sinners and

1. Ibid., p. 336.

their concept of the Muslim community. It seems that the Karrāmites went too far in their conclusions and pushed the Murji'ite views to the extreme by making the condition for membership of the community the verbal confession of the shahāda, and thus they came to embrace even the hypocrites since these ostensibly claim to be Muslims. This might be well illustrated by al-Baghḍādī's statement concerning the Karrāmite concept of the Muslim community; according to him "The Karrāmites hold that the expression Muslim Community (ummat al-Islām) comprises all those who enunciate the two parts of the creed (i.e. the shahāda). They said everyone who says "there is no God but Allāh and Muḥammad is the Prophet of Allāh" is verily a true believer and belongs to the Muslim community, no matter whether he is sincere or insincere, hiding unbelief and heresy under this assertion."¹

This is of course a typical Murji'ite attitude, therefore Ash'ari is right in counting the sect as one of the Murji'ite sub-sects as far as the problem of īmān is concerned.

The Arguments of the Karrāmites that īmān is verbal confession

As support for their views, the Karrāmites quoted the Qur'ānic verses in which, they thought, īmān was defined as only verbal confession, such as: "say ye: we believe in Allah and what has been revealed to us" (Q.II:136). "They say: our Lord we believe, so write us down among those who bear witness" (Q.V:83). "So Allah

1. Farg, p. 12.

rewarded them for what they said" (Q.V:85). In these verses, the Karrāmites said, īmān has been defined as mere verbal confession, and there is no mention of assent or work.¹

Moreover the Karrāmites put forward many traditions in support of their thesis, such as the Prophet's saying, "who that says there is no god but God will enter paradise"; and "I have been ordered to fight people until they say there is no god but God...". This Tradition shows that the prophet was ordered to invite people only to the enunciation of the shahāda. Thus they proved that what is incumbent upon people is only verbal confession. Besides, there are many incidents which show that the Prophet and his Companions were completely satisfied if the person only confesses the shahāda. They accepted him as a believer without making further investigation about his knowledge of God, his assent by heart or his works. This confirms that īmān is only an enunciation of the shahāda and includes neither work nor knowledge.²

The Karrāmites argued against the notion that īmān is assent or knowledge by the heart, on the ground that the heart is not under human observation or control, therefore man cannot be judged by the inner feeling of his heart since no-one knows what others' hearts hold. In this case the verbal confession should be the judge, and it is the only possible way by which to distinguish between a believer and an unbeliever.³

1. Bazdawī, Uṣūl, p. 148.

2. Ibid., p. 148; Fisal, Vol. 3, p. 203; Mawāqif, Vol. 8, p. 323.

3. Ar-Rawḍa al-Bahiyya, p. 23.

On these grounds the Karrāmites considered the hypocrite as a believer since he confesses his belief, and comes under the religious obligations connected with the belief, and submits to the laws and the observations.¹ At the same time they maintain that whoever assents in his heart, but does not openly confess his assent, has absolutely no relation at all to any aspect of īmān, neither in this world nor in the hereafter. Nor is such a man among those to whom God has addressed his words "O You who believe".² This might be understood as a reaction against the Jahmite and similar groups who maintain that īmān is only knowledge by the heart. But one doubts whether the Karrāmites went to the extent of saying that whoever is compelled to hide his belief (mukrah) is kāfir but will be in paradise.³

The critics of the Karrāmiyya rejected the sect's arguments. They quoted many verses which indicate that the place of īmān is the heart, and not the tongue. Such as: "these are they in whose hearts Allah has inscribed the īmān" (Q.22), and "Save him who is forced thereto while his heart finds peace in the faith" (Q.XVI:106). These verses clearly show that the place of īmān is the heart.⁴

1. īmān, p. 118.

2. Ibid., p. 118.

3. Uṣūl, p. 250; Irshād, p. 224. According to Abū-‘Udhba, the Karrāmites maintain that the mukrah will be even in the fire in the hereafter. This seems completely absurd and does not logically follow from the general view of the sect. See ar-Rawḍa al-Bahiyya, p. 23.

4. ar-Rāzī, Tafsīr, Vol. V, p. 357.

Moreover the Prophet's Tradition which says "Establish, O Allah, my heart in thy religion and obedience to thee" indicates that the heart is the real place of īmān.

Ar-Rāzī, following the Ash'arite school, maintains that īmān linguistically means assent (tasdīq), and thus defines it as only i'tiqād; the verbal confession is only the manifestation of it while works are excluded from its definition.¹ Ar-Rāzī refuted the Karrāmites' view that īmān is a verbal confession, and quoted as support for his opinion the Qur'ānic verse "And there are some people who say: we believe in Allah and the last day, and they are not believers" (Q.II:8). In this verse ar-Rāzī argued God has denied to those who confess only by their tongues the quality of īmān, and if īmān is only verbal confession, this denial will not be right, which is absurd.²

From the standpoint of the language, the opponents of the Karrāmites argued that there is no dispute that the man who confesses with his tongue only should be called a believer, or that the outward matters of the law should be applied to him. But the dispute is whether he is a believer, when it is a matter between him and Allah. The Prophet and those who came after him, just as they ruled that one was a believer who uttered the shahāda, also ruled that a hypocrite was an unbeliever. Thus the prophet indicated that the action of the tongue is not sufficient for belief. Moreover, the consensus of the Muslim Community confirms the belief of

1. Muḥaṣṣal, p. 172; Ma'ālim, p. 144.

2. ar-Rāzī, Tafsīr, Vol. 1. p. 165.

him who assented with his heart and purposes to confess with his tongue, but something like dumbness prevented him. It is evident, the critics concluded, that the real essence of īmān is not merely the two words of the shahāda as the Karrāmites asserted.¹

From these arguments it seems that the Karrāmites' critics have missed the important point in this sect's concept of īmān, that is the distinction between calling a person ma'min in this world and his being a true mu'min in the hereafter. As has been said before, the Karrāmites do not consider the hypocrite to be a true believer in the sight of God, because, to them, he will be forever in hell, which is indeed the same position as the kāfir. Admitting these facts, one can see no substantial disagreement between the Karrāmites and their opponents concerning this point. The Karrāmites' shortcoming, however, which makes their arguments appear to be naive, is that they laid great emphasis on the verbal confession as a concept of īmān. It is noticeable that their opponent completely neglects the other concept of īmān as primal covenant, which it is appropriate to discuss now.

The Karrāmites' concept of īmān as primal covenant

It has already been mentioned that the Karrāmites maintained that īmān means the confession, not by the tongue, but that which was made for the first time by the offspring from the loins of Adam (when they were seeds) at the beginning of creation.² The

1. Taftāzānī, pp. 127-8; Trans. p. 119; cf. Ihyā'a, Vol. 1, p. 105. Mawāqif, Vol. 8, p. 323.

2. Farq, p. 223; Uṣūl, pp. 250-51; Tabṣīr, p. 69; cf. Mawāqif, Vol. 8, p. 400.

Karrāmites believe that this covenant endures forever, becoming ineffective only if one apostatizes. It was made by all human beings. They based the concept of īmān on the interpretation of the Qur'ānic verse which says "And when thy Lord brings from Adam's children - out of their loins - their offspring and makes them witness against their own selves by saying Am I your Lord? they say, 'Yes indeed we do bear witness.' This He does lest you should say on the day of resurrection we were surely unaware of this." (Q.VII:172).

According to ash-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, the Karrāmites maintain that the meaning of the verse is that God (in the beginning) brought forth from the loins of Adam the whole of his descendants (i.e. the whole of mankind) in the state of seeds, and while they were yet in that state, God made them confess their knowledge of Him and testify for themselves.¹

The same interpretation is ascribed to the sect by Bazdawī - who added that the Karrāmites argued that God in this verse, tells us that the whole people said, "yes indeed", therefore this must be the belief of them all (whether they are now believers or unbelievers). The Karrāmites quote as support for their view the other Qur'ānic verse which says: "On the day when some faces turn white and some faces turn black, then as to those whose faces are black it will be said to them did you disbelieve after your belief? So taste the chastisement because of your disbelief". (Q.III:106).

1. Amālī, Vol. 1, p. 28. quoted by Izutsu, op.cit., p. 156.

In this verse God addressed the unbeliever by saying "Did you become an unbeliever after your belief?" but the Karrāmites say there is no such belief of the kāfirs apart from that covenant. This, the Karrāmites said, shows that this covenant was īmān for the whole human race.¹

Thus the Karrāmites understood this verse as referring to a historical event which happened at the beginning of history, and in which the whole people made confession that God is their Lord. That is the real belief as long as one keeps it, and does not destroy it by apostasy.²

Commenting on this verse, ar-Rāzī mentions two different interpretations, one of which he ascribes to the early commentators and Traditionists (qudamā' al-mufasssīrīn wa-ahl-al-'āthār) and the other to those who were concerned with speculation and reasoning (aṣḥāb an-naẓar wa-aṣḥāb al-ma'qūlāt).

One of the first groups' interpretations was attributed to Muqātil who said that God produces from the loins of Adam two kinds of progeny; black from Adam's left side, and white from his right side. Then God said to Adam "these are your progeny," and God addressed them "Am I your Lord?" They replied "Yes indeed". At that moment God allotted the white to paradise and the black ones to Hell, and returned them back to Adam's loin". According to Rāzī, this interpretation has been maintained by many of the early

1. Bazdawī, Uṣūl, p. 212. Ar-Rāzī ascribed similar interpretation to Ubay Ibn-Ka'b who said that whoever becomes an unbeliever in this life, his kuf was preceded by that pre-natal or primal covenant. See Rāzī, Tafsīr, Vol. 3, p. 22.

2. Ibn-Ḥazm holds the same view in his Fīṣal, See Fīṣal, Vol. 4. pp. 77-78.

Mufasssīrīn such as Sa'īd-Ibn-al-Musayyib, Sa'īd Ibn-Jubayr, ad-Dahhāk, 'Ikrima and al-Kalbī.¹ The similarities between this interpretation and that of the Karrāmites need not be mentioned.²

The other group, that is: aṣḥāb an-naẓar denied the occurring of such an historical event and explained the verse as meaning that God produced progeny, from the loins of their own fathers, and not from the loins of Adam. This procedure took place according to the natural stages of creation from the stage of the embryo to that of physical and mental maturity. At this later stage God makes these progeny witnesses against themselves by equipping them with all things and signs which prove God's lordship, unity and power. By this equipment and signs created in themselves or around them, these progeny were making attestation and confession even if they did not actually confess by their tongues.³

This later interpretation and similar arguments were mentioned by az-Zamakhsharī⁴ and al-Murtada,⁵ which suggests that ar-Rāzī was referring ^{by} aṣḥāb-an-naẓar to the Mu'tazilites and similar groups.⁶

1. ar-Rāzī, Tafsīr, Vol. 4, p. 309. Bazdawī, ascribed this view to the majority of ahl as-Sunna wal-Jamā'a, Uṣūl, p. 211.

2. This seems to be linked up with the idea of the fiṭra. It is a way of saying that man is by nature a believer.

3. ar-Rāzī, Tafsīr, Vol. 4, p. 311.

4. Zamakhsharī, Khashshāf, Vol. 2, p. 176.

5. Amālī, p. 29, quoted by Izutsu, op.cit., p. 157.

6. According to Bazdawī, some Sunnite including Abū-Mansūr al-Māturīdī, hold the same view. Uṣūl, p. 211.

Against the al-mufasssīrīn's interpretation of the Verse, the Mu'tazilites raised many objections based on grammatical as well as rational points. Referring to the Karrāmites in particular, al-Murtaḍa mentioned almost the same points, so it is better to give the latter's views as representing the Mu'tazilites' standpoint as well.

According to Murtaḍa the Karrāmite interpretation is contrary to both the plain meaning of the Qur'ānic verse itself and to Reason. The Qur'ān in the first place says "when thy Lord produced from the children of Adam, from their bins;" and not "from Adam, from his loins." Furthermore God says "their progeny" and adds that he arranged the matter this way in order that they might not say on the last day, "Verily we were totally unaware of this (Q.VII:172), or, "our fathers had been polytheists in the past and we were merely their seeds after them. Do thou (now) destroy us on account of what the wrong doers (i.e. our fathers) used to do? (Q.VII:173). This makes it clear Murtaḍa says, that the problem concerns those who had polytheists as their fathers. In other words, only some of the descendants of the children of Adam are in question here.¹

In the second place, the Karrāmite interpretation of the verse contradicts reason too. For the "seeds" that are said to have been produced from the loins of Adam, and addressed by God and made to confess, must have been already at that stage,

1. Cf. ar-Rāzī, op.cit., p. 310.

perfectly endowed with mature Reason and all the necessary conditions for the imposition of religious duties. Otherwise, it would have been absurd on the part of God to address them and try to make them confess. But if, on the other hand, they were perfectly endowed with mature reason, so much so that they fulfilled all the conditions for the impositions of religious duties, it must necessarily be the case that these people remembered all that happened in the previous (pre-natal) state, even after they were actually born into this world, grew up, and acquired mature reason. For generally, a man equipped with reason does not forget this kind of event after the lapse of a long period of time, just as the intervention of sleep, drunkenness, or temporary insanity do not sweep away anything from the memory of an intelligent man".¹

Ar-Rāzī acknowledges the Mu'tazilites' objections to the mufasssirin's interpretation of the verse, which are based on grammatical points, but he refuted their other rational arguments.² Rāzī maintains that the evident meaning of the verse is that God brings the seeds from the loins of the children of Adam, but this possibly might mean that God knows that from a particular person another would be produced and from the last one another one produced and so forth. And according to this arrangement, God brings them into being and distinguishes each one of them from the other. There is nothing, however, in the verse either to prove, or disprove that God brings the progeny from Adam's loins. But since the verse

1. Amālī, Vol. 1, pp. 28-9. quoted by Izutsu op.cit., pp. 156-7.

2. ar-Rāzī, Tafsīr, Vol. 4, p. 212.

proves the production of the progeny's from the loins of the children of Adam and an authentic Tradition demonstrates the bringing of the progeny from the loins of Adam, we have to accept them both since neither of them could be rejected.¹

After seeing on what grounds the Karrāmites based their view of īmān as a primal covenant, we might proceed further and see whether the Karrāmites are consistent in holding such views, and at the same time maintaining the īmān is only verbal confession by the tongue. Professor Izutsu has raised the point that the Karrāmites' concept of the first verbal attestation would invalidate and make unnecessary all acts of attestation by individuals, because the whole of mankind has already at the beginning of history made, so to speak, a group confession. In his view, this would simply destroy the Karrāmites' thesis of īmān itself (i.e. verbal confession), for everyone, according to this interpretation, is a believer, whether or not he himself has confessed his faith individually.²

These points of Professor Izutsu are quite justified, but it does not seem that the Karrāmites, by holding the concept of īmān as primal covenant, destroy their theory of īmān as verbal confession as he suggested. Because, as has already been demonstrated, the Karrāmites confined the validity of the verbal confession as īmān to the person's position in this life, that is to be qualified as mu'min, to be considered as a member of the

1. ar-Rāzī, Tafsīr, Vol. 4, p. 212.

2. Izutsu, op.cit., p. 155.

Muslim community, to have the rights and obligations of the laws, etc., and in this sense they consider the hypocrite as mu'min. But this verbal confession alone without the support of the inner belief (that is the primal covenant in the Karrāmite views) will not save from eternal punishment in hell.

By the same logic the man who is a truly convinced mu'min (i.e. still keeping the primal covenant) must verbally make confession otherwise he would not be considered as mu'min as far as this life is concerned, because to the Karrāmites verbal confession is the only way to know that a man is a believer or an unbeliever. As for his destiny in the hereafter, certainly he would be in paradise; thus the Karrāmites fell into what seems to be a contradiction, that is by considering a believer (hypocrite) to be eternally punished in hell, and kāfir (that is who is convinced by his heart, but does not make verbal confession) to be in paradise.

Consistently with their view of the primal covenant, the Karrāmites dealt with the question concerning the state of the children and their destiny. It is believed that the Karrāmites maintain that all children, whether their parents were believers or unbelievers, are to be considered as believers as long as they have not reached maturity. And if they die at this stage (i.e. before maturity) they will go to paradise because of their previous belief,¹ that is their attestation at the beginning of creation.

1. Baghdādī, Uṣūl, p. 259. Bazdawī, Uṣūl, p. 211.

If, however, the child reaches maturity and becomes an unbeliever, then the position of his parents should be considered. If they were unbelievers also, then no action against him should be taken, but if they were believers, or one of them was, then the child will be considered as apostate.¹

The Karrāmite view on this point, apart from being consistent with their views regarding īmān, is in contrast with the views of the Khārījites sect, the Azāriqa, since the latter hold that all the children whose parents were polytheists, are polytheists, and they will be in hell with their parents.² The Ash'arites' views concerning this point is that they agreed on the destiny of the children whose parents were believers and that they will be in paradise.³ For the children of the polytheists different views were ascribed to the sect. Al-Ash'arī himself, while he maintains in his Maqālāt⁴ that the destiny of all children is entrusted to God to do with them whatever He wills, he maintained in Ibāna that for the children of the polytheists God will kindle a fire in the next world, and then will say to them "Rush into it!" as the Tradition tells concerning this point.⁵

From what has been said in this chapter, it would seem clear that the Karrāmites hold two definitions of īmān. On the one hand

1. Baghdādī, Uṣūl, p. 257.

2. Ibid., p. 259; Fisal, Vol. 4, p. 72.

3. Baghdādī, Uṣūl, p. 261.

4. Ash'arī, Maqālāt, p. 296.

5. Ash'arī, Ibāna, p. 10.

they defined īmān as verbal confession by the tongue, but this is confined to life in this world. In this sense they consider the hypocrites as believers. On the other hand, the Karrāmites conceived īmān as the confession made at the beginning of creation, which is enduring and made by all human kind and only apostasy can destroy and in this case a new confession is needed. For those who hold the latter attestation (i.e. primal confession) a verbal confession is necessary in order to be considered as members of the Muslim Community. Thus the Karrāmites might be considered as part of the irjā' movement. Some of their opponents such as al-Baghdādī, Isfarā'īnī and Ibn-Ḥazm have either failed to understand their views or deliberately tried to distort and misrepresent them. Ar-Rāzī has shown some understanding of the Karrāmite views, but he allowed small room for their discussion, while ash-Shahrastānī and Ibn-Taymiyya fully understood and fairly treated the sect's views.

1. Farukh-Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam*, p. 11.

2. Farukh-Rahman, *ibid.* Vol. 1, art. "Barāhima", p. 1071.

3. Farukh-Rahman, "al-Mir'at" in *History of Muslim Philosophy*.

4. Vol. 1, p. 285, ed. M. Sharif.

CHAPTER VI

The Karrāmite Concept of Prophecy

In the foregoing chapters we have dealt with the Karrāmite views on the nature of God and his attributes, and their doctrine of Free will and Predestination, as well as their concept of īmān. In this chapter we shall deal with the sect's views regarding the problem of prophecy particularly its concept and the sinlessness of the prophets.

The Concept of Prophecy

Apart from the Muslim philosophers' doctrine of prophecy which was largely founded upon the Greek theories about the soul and its power of cognition,¹ it seems that the questions concerning the concept of prophecy and the definition of a prophet, were largely outgrowths from the discussions and disputations which took place between the Muslims on the one hand, and the Christians, Jews and the Barāhima on the other. From the early days of Islam, the Muslims came into contact with these groups. Christians and Jews who had their own concept of prophecy denied Muḥammad's Prophethood, while the Barāhima completely rejected the idea of prophecy and saw no necessity for it.² The Barāhima's views, however, might have, to some extent, contributed to the wave of scepticism and the tendency to refute prophecy which prevailed in the third and fourth centuries A.H.³ and which was led by Ibn-ar-Rāwandī and Muḥammad

1. Fazlur-Rahmān, Prophecy in Islam, p. 11.

2. Fazlur-Rahmān, E.I.² Vol. 1, art. "Barāhima", p. 1031.

3. Ibrāhīm Madkūr "al-Fārābī" in History of Muslim Philosophy, Vol. 1. p. 465, ed. MM. Sharīf.

Ibn-Zakariyya ar-Rāzī. Ar-Rāzī, apart from his rejection of religion and his assumption that philosophy is the only way to reform both individual and society, compiled books such as Makhārīq al-Anbiyā' or Ḥiyal al-Mutanabbiyīn refuting prophecy.¹ The reaction of the Muslims to both the attack against the Prophethood of Muḥammad and these heretical views showed itself in the appearance of many works dedicated to this subject such as Tathbīt an-Nubuwwa,² Tathbīt ar-Risala,³ Ithbāt ar-Rusul⁴ and Dalā'il an-Nubuwwa;⁵ and in the debates and prolonged arguments and discussions on this matter found in the book of theology.

The Muslim philosophers - except ar-Rāzī - developed their own views on prophecy based on their concept of the human soul and its imaginative power, and the relation between the soul and the active intelligence. Upon such conception, al-Farābī maintained that people differ vastly with regard to the imaginative powers of their souls; while some men are almost devoid of these imaginative powers, others possess them in high degree. These latter must be exceptionally endowed men who have a total contact with reality, that is the active intelligence, this degree of imaginative power is that of the prophet.⁶ But that contact between the soul and the active intelligence might possibly be

1. P. Kraus and S. Pines, E.I.¹, Vol. 3, art. "Ar-Rāzī" p. 1135-6.

2. Ibn-an-Nadīm, Kitāb al-Fihrist, p. 246.

3. Ibid., p. 251.

4. Ibid., p. 255.

5. Ibid., p. 198.

6. Ibrāhīm Madkūr, op.cit., p. 463.

obtained in two ways. It can be obtained either by contemplation and deep thought or through inspiration. The soul through its own effort, study and quest can rise to the level of the acquired intellect (al-'aql al-mustafād), when it becomes the recipient of the Divine Light, thus through speculative studies the philosopher and the Mystic can make contact with the active intelligence. This contact is of the same nature as that which happened to the prophet, but the contact between the prophet's soul and the active intelligence comes about by inspiration. This inspiration or revelation is caused by imagination and takes shape either of true dreams in sleep or of revelation when awake. Moreover al-Fārābī held that:

"when a man's imaginative power reveals its extreme perfection so that he receives in his waking life from the active intelligence a knowledge of present or future facts or of their sensible symbols of immaterial intelligibles and of the higher immaterial existence, and indeed sees all these - it is not impossible that he becomes a prophet giving news of the Divine realms thanks to the intelligibles he received. This is the highest degree of perfection a man can reach with his imaginative power."¹

So the Prophet to al-Fārābī is a person of extraordinary intellectual endowment such that by means of it he is able to know all things by himself without the help of instruction by any external source.² The philosopher through his speculation and studies can obtain the same contact with the active intelligence.

But this does not mean that he can obtain the same degree of prophecy

1. Fārābī, Madīna, p. 94, trans. F. Rahmān, op.cit. pp. 37-8.

2. Fazlur-Rahman, op.cit., p. 30.

because as Ibn-Sina held there are two ways in which prophetic intellect differs from ordinary philosophical or mystical cognition (1), the ordinary mind has first to exercise itself on the data of perceptual experience, since it is similar to a rusty mirror which needs polishing, while in the case of the prophetic mind this is not necessary since it is by nature pure and can therefore directly contact the active intelligence. 2) The ordinary mind, even when it has risen to intellectual cognition, receives intelligibles only partially and successively, one reflection has to be removed in order to give place to the succeeding one. The prophet's mind on the other hand receives all knowledge at once.¹ But is it possible that the philosopher or the mystic by exercising more effort will reach the degree of prophecy? The philosophers gave no clear illustration to this point; it was, however, carried on by the mystic and led later philosoph-mystics such as Ibn-'Arabī to classify the saints as higher than the prophets.²

Concerning the Karrāmites' views regarding the problem of prophecy it is said that they maintain that prophecy and apostleship are true attributes (ṣifāt)³ or accidents ('arāq)⁴ inherent in the prophet and the apostle. These are other than their revelation, miracles and their sinlessness. Everyone in whom this attribute or accident is actualized must necessarily be

1. Ibid., p. 32.

2. Ibn-Taymiyya, Minhāj as-Sunna, Vol. 4, p. 149.

3. Farq, p. 221.

4. Tabṣīr, p. 68.

sent by God. The Karrāmites distinguished between the apostle (rasūl) and the "sent one" (mursal) by saying that the apostle is he in whom that attribute or accident inheres and the "sent one" is he who is charged with carrying the apostleship into execution.¹ Moreover the Karrāmites hold that Prophecy in this sense was created in the prophet before the revelation came to him. It is not an acquired thing and the prophet made no effort whatsoever to attain it. It has been created in him in the same way that his characteristics, or colour or existence were created and given to him. The Karrāmites concluded that because of this the prophet receives no reward for his being a prophet.²

But if prophecy was neither revelation nor miracles nor the sinlessness of the Prophets, what does it mean then? According to al-Baghdādī, the Karrāmites gave no answer to this question; they only excluded these three aspects from its concept, but they failed to give it a positive definition.³ In spite of the obvious fact that the Karrāmites gave no specific definition of prophecy, the following points, however, might be gathered from what has been ascribed to them. The first point is that the Karrāmites clearly stated that prophecy is something inherent or created in the prophet before having any revelation. Therefore it is not something acquired by him, and thus it cannot be acquired only by man's efforts. The second point, is that they

1. Ibid., p. 68, Farq, p. 221.

2. Tabṣīr, p. 68.

3. Baghdādī, Uṣūl, p. 154.

differentiated between the term rasūl and mursal; thirdly, they made it incumbent upon God to send some one in whom these attributes actualized. We will leave this last point, for the moment, to be discussed later with similar points.

Concerning the first point - that prophecy is something inherent and is not acquired - 'Ali Sāmī an-Nashār is of the opinion that the Karrāmites' views in this respect were mainly directed against the philosophers or were a reaction to their tenets that a man through his own efforts can obtain some degree of prophecy. Against these views of the philosophers, Nashār said the Karrāmites denied that prophecy can be acquired; and strongly emphasized that prophecy and apostleship are "abstract form" (ma'na) inherent eternally in the prophet and the apostle. The Karrāmites held that prophecy is a selection (iṣṭifā'), that is that God from eternity selected the prophet or the apostle and endowed him with prophecy. Thus the Karrāmites' views seem to be identical with those of the Ash'arites' since the latter explained prophecy as selection by God.¹

It is true that the Ash'arites define prophecy as special Divine favour by the virtue of which the recipient of the prophetic missionis singled out from the rest of mankind,² they also said that prophecy is a mercy vouchsafed by God to those whom He has chosen.³

1. Nashār, Nasha't al-Fikr al-Falsafī fi-l-'Islām, Vol. 1. p. 635.

2. Irshād, p. 204, Mawāqif, Vol. 8. p. 218.

3. Iqdām, p. 428.

At the same time, however, the Ash'arites denied that prophecy is an attribute of the prophet or an accident inherent in him such as his colour.¹ They said that in addition to God's bestowal an effort is necessary on the part of the prophet to prepare his soul for the reception of the message. From this it seems that there is a difference between the views of the Ash'arites and those of the Karrāmites. Although both of them hold that prophecy is only a selection and bestowal by God, the Karrāmites hold that prophecy is only the work of God without any effort from the prophet's side whatsoever. The Ash'arites, however, maintain that the prophet's soul and temperament must possess all natural perfection, excellent characters, truthfulness and honesty in speech and deed before his appointment to the office, because it is by virtue of these that he has deserved the prophetic mission and has come into contact with angels and received the revelation.² The Ash'arites did not agree with the philosophers that prophecy can be acquired nor did they hold the Karrāmite view that it is merely an attribute or accident bestowed by God. To them prophecy "is neither pure chance (without a natural descent), so that every creeping shuffling creature may be its recipient, nor is it attained by pure efforts so that everyone who thinks may possess it."³

Thus both the Ash'arites and the Karrāmites agreed that prophecy is a bestowal by God and that it cannot be acquired. But

1. Ibid., p. 462.

2. Ibid., p. 462, Fazlur-Rahmān, op.cit., p. 100.

3. Ghazālī, Ma'ārij al-Quds, p. 142. Quo. Fazlur-Rahmān, op.cit., p. 96.

while the Karrāmites made no reference to the dispositive qualities presupposed by prophethood, the Ash'arites emphasized these points, and clearly stated that an effort on the part of the prophet must be made in order to prepare himself for the revelation.

The difference between the Messenger (rasūl) and the mursal

According to their concept of prophecy as an attribute or accident inherent in the prophet or the apostle, the Karrāmites make a distinction between the messenger (rasūl) and the one who is actually sent (mursal). They maintain that he who has this attribute is a rasūl even without being sent (though God must send him), thus everyone who is mursal is a rasūl and not vice versa.¹ They said that the mursal might be dismissed from his mission but this does not mean that he forfeits his being a rasūl.² Thus the Karrāmites did not differentiate between the nabī and the rasūl as do the other Sunnite Muslims, but they rather made a distinction between the rasūl and the mursal. Such views and definitions of rasūl and mursal, however, led the Karrāmites to hold in opposition to all other Sunnite Muslims, a strange view, that the prophet after his death is no longer mursal.³ They said that he is a rasūl in the sense of being endowed with the attribute of prophecy but he has ceased to be mursal. But does this imply the end of

1. Tabṣīr, p. 68.

2. Mawāqif, Vol. 8, p. 399.

3. Tabṣīr, p. 68.

his mission or Sharī'a as well, or do the Karrāmites simply mean the end of the physical presence of the Prophet? It seems that some opponents of the Karrāmites understood their views as implying the end of the prophet's mission and message.

Ibn-Ḥazm, who strongly repudiated these views, ascribed them to a heretic group (firqa muḥtadi'a), and mistakenly to the Ash'arites. According to him that heretic group and the Ash'arites asserted that Muḥammad (Peace be upon him) is not now a rasūl. They based this assumption on their views that the soul is an accident ('araḍ) and that the accident does not remain the same for two moments at a time, but is in a state of continuous change. After the prophet died they said, his soul perished because it had no place in which to subsist; therefore the prophet in his grave is a corpse and his prophethood and his message came to an end.¹ Against these views, Ibn-Ḥazm introduced long arguments and refutations. But it seems that he had either misunderstood the sect's views or that he was talking about another sect, because the Karrāmites did not deny that the prophet was a rasūl even after his death, nor refuted the continuity of his message; the Karrāmites simply said that the prophet after his death is no longer mursal.

The Ash'arite theologians also rejected the Karrāmites' views, and maintained that the prophet after his death is rasūl and mursal, in the sense that God has sent him, and he accomplished his mission; therefore he deserves to be called rasūl and mursal.

1. Fisḥal, Vol. 1, p. 88; cf. ar-Rawḍa al-Bahiyya, pp. 13-14.

though he, at the present, is not actually preaching his message. This is similar to the application of the term mu'min to a person after his death in the sense that he deserves this title for his belief and for what he did during his life.¹ Al-Isfarā'īnī in his arguments against the Karrāmites' views did not seem to have misunderstood them as Ibn-Ḥazm did (that their views imply the denial of the prophet's apostleship or his message. Therefore al-Isfarā'īnī tried to demonstrate the possibility of calling the prophet mursal, even after his death, by drawing many examples from the customary usage of the language. He said "we usually describe a man by what he has done though he is not practising it at the moment we are talking about him. Thus we describe a person as a pilgrim, fighter, thief, etc. though none of them is actually making pilgrimage, fighting or committing a theft. It is the same as calling a person a hewer or tailor though neither of them is hewing or sewing. No one, according to al-Isfarā'īnī, says that the prophet is occupied in his grave in preaching his message, but this does not entail that he should not be called "mursal".² From this it seems that the disagreement between the Ash'arites and the Karrāmites is linguistic, confined only to whether it should be said that the prophet is mursal at present or not, and it has no further implications of denying his message or prophethood.

1. Tabṣīr, p. 68.

2. Ibid., p. 68.

Nashār, however, viewed these Karrāmites' ideas as representing the beginning of the trend adopted by Ibn-Taymiyya and carried out by the Wahhābites in the last century, that is the denial of any sort of holiness in the person of the prophet.¹ It is true that, in his arguments against the Rāfiḍites' views, Ibn-Taymiyya strongly criticized their veneration of the tomb of the prophet and of their Imams and quoted several Traditions in which the prophet warned his followers not to venerate him and to make his tomb a mosque.² It is also true that the Wahhābites advocated and put to practice such views and considered it as polytheistic (shirk) to introduce the name of the prophet, saints, angels into a prayer.³ The ultimate aims of Ibn-Taymiyya and the Wahhābites were to counter the popular movement among the Muslims of making the tombs of the prophets and of the saints into holy places visited and venerated; they were anxious that such a trend might easily lead to polytheism. Therefore the explanation of the Karrāmite view as being the forerunner of such doctrine needs more evidences. But neither the scant views ascribed to the sect nor the argument of their opponents support Nashār's suggestion, which is, however, highly interesting.

The sinlessness of the Prophet

If the concept of prophecy was developed later in Muslim Theology, there are evidences to show that the question whether

1. Nashār, op.cit., Vol. 1, p. 637.

2. Minhāj as-Sunna, Vol. 1. pp. 130-32.

3. E.I^s art. "Wahhābiya", p. 618.

prophets are liable to sin or not had risen comparatively earlier. The Qur'ān itself presents the prophets as human beings liable to make mistakes and sins; and many mistakes made by the prophets were recorded. In the collection of the Tradition, there is no trace of the impeccability of the prophets; on the contrary several of them were mentioned in connection with sins.¹ The Doctrine of the sinlessness of the prophets, however, owes its origin and acquired much more importance with the Shī'ites' circles.² But it must be remembered that the Shī'ites did not advocate this doctrine for its own sake or for the sake of the prophets, but they were in fact preparing the way for their views concerning the infallibility of their Imams.

Among the Sunnites, the early source in which this doctrine appeared in formal shape was the Fiqh Akbar II, which might go back to the time of al-Ash'ari (873/935).³ In this work it is clearly stated that "All prophets are exempt from sins both light and grave, from unbelief and sordid deeds; yet stumbling and mistakes may happen on their parts. The prophet Muḥammad himself, however, did not serve idols, nor was he at any time a polytheist even for a single moment. And he never committed any small or grave sin."⁴ In the creeds of al-Ash'ari in the Ibāna and the Maqālāt, which were respectively described as representing the views of ahl-as-Sunna and aṣḥāb-al-Ḥadīth, no trace of the doctrine of the sinlessness or the

1. The Muslim Creed, p. 217.

2. Ibid., p. 218; Donaldson, the Shi'ite religion, p. 331.

3. The Muslim Creed, p. 246.

4. Ibid., p. 192.

sinfulness of the prophets can be found. But immediately after al-Ash'arī this problem was widely discussed in the books of theology, and it led to various differences of opinion among the Muslims.

Ar-Rāzī in his treatment of this problem gave a comprehensive summary of the ^{views} sects.¹ He first defined the aspects related to this problem whether the prophet's impecability in regard to something related to their belief or the conveying of their message (tablīgh), or legal rulings and decisions or something related to their acts. The majority of the community agreed that the prophet cannot be an unbeliever or go astray regarding his faith, the Fuḍayliyya among the Khārijites, however, allowed this because they consider the commission of sin as an act of unbelief. There is also unanimous agreement that the prophets have been protected from lying and from distortion in their tablīgh, otherwise one cannot put any confidence in their messages. As for the legal rules and decisions, it is unanimously agreed that the prophets cannot err in this sphere intentionally; some people, however, permitted some kind of unintentional error, while others have rejected even this.

Concerning the prophet's actions, five different opinions were mentioned; the Ḥashawites allowed the commission of grave sins and errors on the part of the Prophet even intentionally.²

1. Ar-Rāzī, Tafsīr, Vol. 1. p. 301.

2. cf. Taftāzānī, p. 136. Al-Bābul-Ḥādī-'Ashar, pp. 58-9.

The Mu'tazilites however did not allow that grave sins and errors could be committed by the prophets, but they permitted small intentional errors except those which are repugnant such as lying and deceiving. Al-Jubbā'ī, among the Mu'tazilites, hold that it is not possible for the prophet to commit grave or small sins and errors intentionally, but it is possible for them to do so unintentionally. There is also the view that prophets cannot err except by mistake and through lack of intention, but that they are punishable on account of these errors, even though such sins and errors are not punishable among their communities. The reason for this is that the prophets' sight (ma'rifa) are much greater and they are much more able than the rest to control themselves and guard against errors and sins. The Rāfiqites hold that the prophets can commit neither grave nor small sins or errors intentionally or unintentionally.

As for the time of impeccability, the Rāfiqites hold that the Prophets are impeccable from the time of their birth; the Mu'tazilites maintain that they are impeccable from the time of their reaching maturity, yet they do not commit acts of unbelief or grave sins before their prophethood. The majority of the Ash'arites and Abū-l-Hudhayl and Abū-'Alī among the Mu'tazilites assert that these sins are possible before the prophets mission, but during their prophethood they are inconceivable.¹

It is noticeable that in his statements of the sect's views

1. Ar-Rāzī, Tafṣīr, Vol. 1, pp. 301-302.

regarding this problem, ar-Rāzī did not mention the Karrāmites' tenets, however, were preserved by al-Baghdādī and Ibn Abī-ʿl-Ḥadīd. According to al-Baghdādī, Ibn-Karrām has mentioned in one of his books that prophets are liable to sin, but he did not explain to what sort of sins they are liable.¹ His followers, however, explained this point and said that prophets are immune from every sin which disqualifies them from giving testimony or which renders punishment necessary, but they are not immune from lesser sin. Some of the Karrāmites say the prophets cannot possibly sin while conveying their message, but others think it admissible and believe that the prophet "Muḥammad" was guilty of a lapse in delivering the Qur'ānic verse "Have you considered El-lat and El-ʿUzza and Manāt the third, the other" by adding "these are the exalted females whose intercession is to be sought."²

So the Karrāmites' views concerning the sinlessness of the prophet, is that the prophets might commit sins, but not all sins irrespective of their being grave or small as Ibn-Ḥazm ascribed to them;³ They limited the sins to those which will not disqualify the prophets from giving testimony. Thus a similarity might be found between the Karrāmites' views and those of the Muʿtazilites, but the latter hold different views from those of the Karrāmites regarding the lapse of the prophet in conveying his message.⁴

1. Baghdādī, Uṣūl, p. 168.

2. Farq, pp. 221-22, Uṣūl, p. 168.

3. Fīṣal, Vol. 1. pp. 1, 205.

4. See Ibn-Abī-ʿl-Ḥadīd, Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāgha Vol. 287.

Ibn-Abī-l-Ḥadīd's reports regarding the Karrāmite views on this problem, are in agreement with those mentioned by al-Baghdādī. He identifies the Karrāmite views with those of the Ḥashawites and according to him, some of the Karrāmites said it is possible for the prophet to make mistakes in his sayings such as in the case of the gharānīq (the statement mentioned above). Others maintained that such mistakes are possibly only in the case of matters the proofs of which are not limited only to the reports of the prophets, because a mistake in such matters does not entail the invalidity of God's proofs against his creatures (ibtāl hujjat-Allah 'alā khalqihī). The instance of the gharānīq is of this kind, because the mere utterance of those words by the prophet did not entail the invalidity of the rational conviction and proof that idols should not be exalted. As for the matters which are only known or proved by traditional evidences (sam'ī) i.e. revelation, it is not possible that the prophet makes mistakes in them, otherwise the proof of such matters by the prophet's report would be invalid.¹ Some Karrāmites maintain that the prophet might make mistakes in words and deeds that are not explanations of the revelation or connected with the Sharī'a. In these latter cases, mistakes are not possible. In matters that have nothing to do with religious affairs, the prophet might make mistakes, such as his suggestion to the farmers of Medina not to pollinate their palm trees which later appeared to be wrong advice.²

1. Ibid., p. 287.

2. Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāgha, Vol. 2, p. 588.

Thus though the Karrāmites differed regarding the limit and the cases in which the prophet might make mistakes, most of them believed that the prophet was mistaken in the case of the gharānīq. The gharānīq instance is often mentioned by the commentators¹ in their commentary on the Qur'ānic verse, "And we never sent a messenger or a prophet before thee but when he desired the devil make a suggestion respecting his desire; but Allah annuls that which the devil casts, then does Allah establish His messages. And Allah is All Knowing All Wise" (Q.XXII:52).

Ar-Rāzī, commenting on this verse, ascribed the story of the gharānīq to the literalist commentators who stated that when the prophet saw that his people in Mecca were turning from his message, he desired that something makes them accepted it would be revealed to him. At that moment while he was sitting in the ka'ba with numbers of Meccans, the Sura of an-Najm was revealed to him and he recited it until he came to the verse "Have you considered El-lat and El-'Uzza, and Manāt the third the other" (Q.L.III:20) Satan put upon his tongue "These are the exalted females whose intercession is to be sought". On hearing this the Meccans were delighted and even prostrated themselves with the prophet, but later Gabriel blamed the prophet for reciting this statement.²

1. Ṭabarī, 17, pp. 119-21. Zamakhsharī, Kashshāf, Vol. 3, pp. 164-65.

2. Ar-Rāzī, Tafṣīr, Vol. 6, p. 165.

Ar-Rāzī was rightly considered as one of the zealous advocates of the doctrine of the sinlessness of the prophets. In his commentary on the Qur'ān and his work al-Arba'īn, ar-Rāzī elaborately discussed and refuted all the arguments put forward by those who denied the absolute sinlessness of the prophets; it is said that he compiled a book on this subject.¹ "It is due to his writing that the present dogma of the sinlessness of the prophet was finally included in ijmā' or the general agreement of the Sunnite theologians."² So it is not surprising to find his views on this point in disagreement with those of the Karrāmites. Ar-Rāzī maintained that the prophets during the time of his mission committed no sins either grave or small. Therefore regarding the instance of the gharānīq, ar-Rāzī did not hold the Ash'arite views - that this word was interlocation by satan who interpolated it between the parts of the prophet's sermon, but he went to the extent of rejecting the story altogether as being mere fabrication, and introduced rational proofs and traditional evidence to show its falsity.³

The rest of the Karrāmites' views concerning the problem of prophecy seem to be closely connected with the sect's other views about the place of reason and whether it is incumbent upon God to do the best for his servants or not. The saying that every one in whom the attribute of prophecy is realized must be sent by God,

1. 'Uyūn, Vol. 2, p. 29.

2. Donaldson, The Shi'ite Religion, p. 337.

3. Ar-Rāzī, Tafṣīr, Vol. 6, pp. 165-69.

is ascribed to the sect. They also hold that if God had confined the charge unto mankind to one messenger from the beginning of time to the day of judgement and continued the law of the first He would not be wise.¹ It is obvious that these two points are closely connected with the problem whether it is incumbent upon God to do things or not. The Ash'arites who hold the opposite view - that nothing is incumbent upon God, rejected these Karramites' ideas and maintained that prophecy is an intellectual possibility and God might send a prophet and might not, but as a matter of fact it is an actual phenomenon. They also maintained that if God confined the message to one prophet from the beginning of time there would be no injustice in that.²

The Karrāmites also hold that if the call of the prophet has not reached a person, he is nevertheless bound to believe rational axioms and to acknowledge that God sends messengers to His creatures. Al-Baghdādī rightly pointed out that most of the Qadarites have already anticipated the Karrāmites regarding the necessity of believing in certain rational principles; but, to him, no one before the Karrāmites has declared that it is necessary to believe in the existence of prophets before they actually existed.³ Since the Mu'tazilites believe that the intellect makes it necessary for man to know God,⁴ the similarity between their views and those of the Karrāmites can be understood. The

1. Farq, pp. 221-3.

2. Iqdām, p. 417; Farq, p. 223.

3. Farq, p. 222.

4. Iqtisād, p. 184.

Karrāmites unprecedented views (as al-Baghdādī put it) that man should believe that God has sent a messenger to His creatures even before the appearance of those messengers might be explained thus: It is possible that the Karrāmites hold this view because they believed that prophets are necessary for the benefit of human beings, and since God does what is good for His servants, therefore Reason alone might deduce that God has sent messengers even without the actual coming of those messengers.

According to al-Baghdādī the Karrāmites also hold that when a prophet's message is announced, it is incumbent upon every one who hears it from him or receive its report, to put his trust in the prophet and to confess his belief in him without waiting for a recognition of his proofs. To al-Baghdādī, the Karrāmites stole this innovation from the Ibādīyya among the Khārijites who argued that the prophet's utterance about himself, "I am a Prophet", is in itself proof which requires no other signs.¹

It seems that these Karrāmites' views answered the question whether the prophet should give man a chance to ponder his message or whether he should believe immediately without hesitation. The Mu'tazilites hold the former view and maintain that man should be given time to reflect about the prophet's proofs.² But the Ash'arites emphasize the necessity of the proofs and say that a prophet ~~without~~ a sign of prophecy testifying to his truth is inconceivable because the reality of prophecy is true utterance

1. Farq, p. 222.

2. Iqdām, p. 433.

together with supporting signs.¹ The Ash'arites however, reject the Mu'tazilites views and say that such views will lead to the interruption of the prophets mission since no definite time can be postulated for reflection.² It is possible that as an answer to that question the Karrāmites affirmed their views that the prophet must be believed without asking him any proofs. But is it possible that such a view might lead inevitably to confusion between pretenders and true prophets? It does not seem that the Karrāmites were aware of this possibility.

From what has been said it might be concluded that the main thesis of the Karrāmites concerning prophecy was that prophecy to them was an attribute bestowed by God and cannot be acquired by man. They differentiated between rasūl (who has this quality) and mursāl (he who is actually sent). The prophet after his death is rasūl but he is no longer mursāl. Prophets are immune from grave sins, but they might make mistakes in their sayings and their deeds. On some point the sect's views are similar to the Mu'tazilites' while on other points they are in agreement with the Ash'arites.

1. Ibid., p. 444.

2. Ibid., p. 433.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

In the foregoing chapters we have tried to explore the history of the Karrāmiyya sect and to expound their theological doctrines. Since ar-Rāzī was deeply involved with the Karrāmites, we tried to give an outline of his life especially that part connected with the Karrāmiyya. It has been shown that although ar-Rāzī was respected as a great scholar and theologian he was a target of the Karrāmites' attack. They repudiated his views and attacked him publicly and possibly caused his death. All this has been demonstrated in the first chapter of this thesis.

In the second chapter we have tried to trace the history of the sect. We have started with the founder of the sect himself Muḥammad Ibn-Karrām. After evaluation of the different aspects of his life and achievement we came to the conclusion that, contrary to the views held about him in the past and by some modern scholars, Ibn-Karrām was not an ignorant man or a mere pretender. He was a sincere preacher, devoted ascetic and a theologian of great importance. On the popular side he was able to attract many people by his simple appearance and modest way of life. On the intellectual side he made his influence felt in the fields of theology, fiqh and mysticism and occupied scholars of other schools in refuting his views and arguing against him. Moreover he left large numbers of adherents who carried on his teachings after his death and played a major role in the Muslim life. The foundation of the first institution for learning in the Muslim world is

attributed to these adherents. They also contributed to the conversion of many people to Islam, and played an important part in the life of Khurāsān and the Ghūr region.

In the following chapters we went on to investigate the theological doctrines of the sect. We pursued the method of comparing the Karrāmite views with those of the other sects, particularly the Ash'arites, and pointed out, throughout the study, the similarities and disagreements between these sects and the Karrāmites. It has been shown that the main problem which occupied the Karrāmites' thought was that of the nature of God and the reality of His existence. We have pointed out that all the Karrāmites applied the term "body" to God and we have shown that they did not mean the materialistic concept of the term, but they simply used it to demonstrate the existence and reality of God. Their opponents, however, saw that the application of the term body implied His origination and would destroy the idea of His transcendence. They therefore vigorously criticised the sect's views. Concerning the Karrāmite view that God is the locus of originated things, we concluded that this problem was largely connected with the sect's views regarding God's attributes. We have seen that the disagreement between the Ash'arites and the Karrāmites on the latter point resulted from the fact that both groups were trying to solve the problem of the relation between God's attributes and the originated things of this world. While the Ash'arites hold that God's attributes are eternal and have been eternally connected with the originated things of this world,

the Karrāmites find it difficult to maintain such views, therefore they affirm originated attributes related to the originated things of this world and subsisting in God's essence. Connected with the Karrāmite views of the attributes of God is their theory of the origination and annihilation of the world, which has been also discussed with the other points in the third chapters.

As for the sect's views regarding the problem of free will and predestination we have seen that although the Karrāmites agreed with the Ash'arites in holding that everything happens according to the destiny and decree of God and in using the term kasb, the Karrāmite views seem to be more close to those of the Mu'tazilites; because, like the Mu'tazilites, they allowed man some sort of freedom in his acts. They agreed with them also in holding that reason is the criterion of good and bad, and that it is incumbent upon God to do what is good for His servants. These points have been discussed in the fourth chapter.

Concerning the sect's views of īmān which have been considered in the fifth chapters, we concluded that their views on this point were typically Murji'ite. They hold that īmān consists only in the confession of the tongue as far as the person's position in this life is concerned. In this case it includes neither taṣdīq nor works. At the same time, however, the Karrāmites uphold the view that all people are believers from the beginning of creation and continue to be so unless they apostate. In the sixth chapter

the sect's doctrine of prophecy is expounded. It has been shown that the main thesis of the Karrāmites is that prophecy is bestowed by God, it cannot be acquired by man's contemplation or quest. Thus the sect's views in this respect are similar to those of the Ash'arites and in opposition to the philosophers who maintain that prophecy can be acquired by man through contemplation and quest. The Karrāmites differentiate between rasūl and mursal saying that the former is he who has the attribute of prophecy and the latter he who has been actually sent. They also hold the view that the prophet after his death is a rasūl but he is no longer mursal. Concerning the sinlessness of the prophets the sect's main views are that the prophets are immune from grave sins, but they are liable to commit small ones and make mistakes in delivering their message as long as these mistakes do not affect the message they preach.

After this attempt of investigating the history and elucidating the theological doctrines of the sect, we believe that a full understanding of the Karrāmites' place in the history of Muslim thought needs further clarification in certain aspects. The contribution of the sect in the field of mysticism and fiqh and their relation to the Ḥanafite school of fiqh and the Maturidites school of Kalām merit further consideration, as do their relation with the Ḥanbalites and the sect's possible influence upon scholars such as Ibn-Taymiyya.

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